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# THE PANJAB PAST AND PRESENT

Vol. XXVII-Part I

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DEPARTMENT OF PUNJAB HISTORICAL STUDIES  
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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## Persian Writings and the Sikh Coins under Ranjit Singh

RAIJASBIR SINGH\*

Persian was the official language of Ranjit Singh's administration in Punjab. The chroniclers of his court and the officials of East India Company in Punjab wrote in Persian. They had special purpose to write on various events, including the coinage of the period. Here we are going to analyse the evidences on the subject. Besides the chronicles, *parvanajat*, *akhbarat*, *madad mu'ash* as documents, testimonials etc. also carry substantial evidences on various aspects of the coinage.

Khushwaqt Rai gave evidence of the prevalence of the Nanakshahi coins.<sup>1</sup> But, he attributed them to Guru Gobind Singh. On the coinage of Ranjit Singh issued in 1800 A.D. all Persian chronicles except Amar Nath<sup>2</sup> provide no evidence. Khushwaqt Rai, Ahmed Shah, Sohan Lal Suri, are silent. Amar Nath says that the legend of the 1800 A.D., coinage is new and invented by some contemporary poet of Ranjit Singh.

Amar Nath says that the Maharaja struck coins in the name of Moran.<sup>3</sup> Foreign Department Secret Political Consultations also provide evidences regarding it.<sup>4</sup> No specimen of *Moranshaht* coin is available so far. The coins with the symbol of the branches of tree, wrongly attributed to the pea-cock feathers are not *Moranshahi*. The coins are of Amritsar mint of Bhangi Misl.

The evidences regarding *Moranshahi* coins are the attempts to derogate the personality of Ranjit Singh and vainly try to show that

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1. Khushwaqt Rai, *Ahwal-i-Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, I O. 3197 of 46.
2. Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, p. 14.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 20. This is a controversial issue and needs further probe into.
4. Foreign Dept. of India, Secret Consultations, No. 19, Nov. 18, 1843, National Archives of India, New Delhi. Recent researches have, however, not found favour with such writings.

he was not the just ruler. These were the parts of the attempts to create mistrust for Ranjit Singh in the mind of the people. It also shows that the Maharaja had relations with the undesirable and he was not a true Sikh. It was an attempt to cause faithlessness towards the Maharaja among his Sikh subjects.

*Parwanajat* documents refer to the circulation of *Nanakshahi*, (Amritsar mint) and *Zamanshahi* coins.<sup>5</sup> The denominations of the coins—*dams*, *rupiyas*, *annas*, *butkis* are also mentioned.<sup>6</sup> The prices of various commodities are given in terms of the coins.<sup>7</sup>

In the *Akhbarat*, besides *rupiya* and *mohar*, the term-coin (*sikka*) is mentioned,<sup>8</sup> which cannot be yet deciphered. The price-lists are given.<sup>9</sup> The relations between various denominations of the coins are mentioned. Sixty four new pices or ninety six old pices are worth one rupee.<sup>10</sup> Exchange rates between Kashmiri and *Nanakshahi* rupee were 157 : 100.<sup>11</sup> *Nanakshahi* and Kashmiri rupees both were prevalent.<sup>12</sup>

Orders were issued to the mint officers of Amritsar mint to mix no more alloy in the coins.<sup>13</sup>

In *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, information on the minting of the coins is available. Misr Beli Ram was the mint-master of Amritsar. He was ordered to prepare the gold coins.<sup>14</sup> B C. Hugel offered suggestion to the Maharaja to mint effigy type coins.<sup>15</sup> The *sarafs* of Amritsar were ordered to prepare gold coins in lieu of *nazrana*.<sup>16</sup>

The *madad-mu'ash* grants papers and the documents regarding land transactions show that *Nanakshahi* coins were prevalent in the

5. J. S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Civil and Military Affairs of Maharaja Ranjit Singh : A Study of 450 Orders in Persian*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1987, pp. 99, 104, 108.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 105, 133, 173.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

8. *The Punjab in 1839-40* (ed. Ganda Singh), Sikh History Society, Amritsar, 1952, p. 54.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 37.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

14. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. 3, Delhi, 1961, p. 186.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 318.

Bari Doab area.<sup>17</sup>

To conclude, the Persian writings on the coinage of the Maharaja provide various types of information on the subject though it is very scanty. The chronicles containing peculiar information has special purpose behind it. They attempted to derogate the personality of the Maharaja in order to serve the aspirations of their master—the East India Company by trying to create distrust towards him among his subject.

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17. J. S. Grewal, *In the Bylanes of History: Some Persian Documents from a Punjab Town*, Simla, 1975, documents Nos, 43, 47, 50.



## Leitner in Lahore : Life and Works

NAZER SINGH\*

G.W. Leitner took over the charge of Principal of Government College, Lahore, on November 15, 1864. In that capacity, he served this premier educational institution in the Punjab for nearly 21 years, till his forced retirement in June 1885. His association with Lahore was even longer, he left it in 1887. By his active public life, he had successfully made it an educational and literary centre. He was virtually 'the author, of the present education policy of the government.'<sup>1</sup> He was a philologist, journalist and excellent organiser. Through his lectures, writings and the Anjuman-i-Punjab—a society organized by him for the diffusion of useful knowledge, he made the Punjabis conscious of the need for modernization. They were involved in educational and social reform activities initiated not only by the British regime but also by the Brahmo Samaj, the Anjuman and 'the Aligarh movement.'<sup>2</sup> Gradually, they evolved their own reform bodies such as the Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha and Hindu Sabha. Leitner was praised and condemned alike by the government and the people he sought to serve by his knowledge of languages and civilizations of both the occident and the orient.<sup>3</sup> When he left Lahore, he was certainly one of the most controversial figures in the British Punjab.

His early life is still little known save that he was born in the capital of Hungary, a country which his parents were soon forced to leave by the revolution of 1848.<sup>4</sup> Somehow, he joined the British armed forces and served them as an interpreter in the Crimean war

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1. For his Lahore career, see Proceedings Home-Education, August, 1885, Nos. 29-42, National Archives of India (Hereafter NAI).
2. See Nazer Singh, "Note on the Anjuman-i- Punjab, Aligarh Movement, Brahmo Samaj, Indian Association, Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha in the Context of Colonial Education in the Punjab," *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXVI-I, April 1992, pp. 35-69.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-58, 69.
4. Proceedings, *op. cit.*

that had begun in 1854. At the end of the war, he was made lecturer in Turkish, Arabic and Modern Greek at the Kings College, London. Before coming to Lahore, he was at the Trieburg University, Germany.

The Crimean War (1854, in Europe) and the uprising of 1857 in India impelled the imperial policy makers in London to know more about the linguistic and cultural reality of the orient in general and that of India and the Ottoman lands in particular. Seen from West Asia, the Muslim communities and Islam were obviously at the centre of this reality.<sup>5</sup> Another element in the scene was the emergence of 'national sentiment' represented by the 'Young Bengal' and 'Young Turk' phenomenon in India, and Turkey respectively. This 'sentiment' was intimately connected with the European and British political cultural and educational presence in and around these areas, and for this very reason it had a social potential to put Muslim dominated medieval polities of Asia on the new lines. But it could do so only if fostered carefully—as it was actually done by the Company's administration in India by adopting English knowledge as an agent of social change.<sup>6</sup> In any scheme of state sponsored social transformation in these regions, not only Arabic and Sanskrit but also Turkish and Hindi were to be given important place.

But the London was hardly conscious of this reality till 1854.<sup>7</sup> Unlike Calcutta, there was hardly any provision in England to officially patronize Arabic and Sanskrit studies aimed at social engineering in the east. The want of this awareness was felt only after the linguistic explanation of 1857 events in India came from the scholars like Max Muller, Charles Trevelyan, Monier Williams and Syed Abdoolaha in London,<sup>8</sup> and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, in India.<sup>9</sup> All they declared the British neglect of Indian languages as to be 'a cause of Indian Rebellion.' How was to over-come this flaw in the imperial policy? Max Muller suggested that an Oriental College for the study of Indian languages be established in London.

5. See, Max Muller, *The Languages of the Seat of War in the East with a Survey of the three Families of Language, Semitic Arian and Turanian*, Norgate, 1855, pp. 7-8.

6. See David Koff, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, Calcutta, 1969, *passim*; H.V. Hampton, 1946, *Biographical Studies in Indian Education*, London, 1946, *passim*.

7. Nirad C. Chaudhri, *Scholar Extraordinary the Life of Max Muller*, Delhi 1947, pp. 181-84, 207-08.

8. *Ibid.*

9. See, G.F.I., Graham, *The Life and Work of Syed Ahmed Khan*, rpt. Delhi, 1947, pp. 40-43.

Max Muller's idea was partly put into practice when an 'Oriental Section' was added to the Kings College. Max Muller and Leitner became friends. By 1861, the latter was a Professor of Arabic and Mohammadan law.<sup>10</sup> The former had already chosen Sanskrit and the Hindu scriptures to work on. Soon, Leitner was appointed Dean of the 'Oriental Section.'

It was with this central background to which was the awareness of British concern for the modernization of the people of India and Turkey in general and their Muslim components in particular that Leitner came to Lahore in 1864. Fully knowing the methods to achieve this since his Crimean days, he executed the Turkish Tanzimat in the Punjab by launching the Anjuman-i-Punjab in January 1865.<sup>11</sup> The Anjuman patronized the Oriental learning by running an Oriental School (later college) in Lahore. This was the first step he took.

As the second one, a free public library with Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian books, and a reading-room where the people could assemble to discuss their social and political affairs, was organized. For this purpose the Shiksha Hall was used. As the third step was launched a movement for the creation of an 'Oriental University' in the Punjab. For this public lectures and meetings were organized in Lahore and 'the natural leaders'—chiefs, zamindars, merchants and priests were successfully approached to subscribe money to the university project.<sup>12</sup>

The Punjab administration recognized the Anjuman during 1886, and projected it as a body spearheading 'the Oriental movement' with a great educational and political potential.<sup>13</sup> It was seen as capable of bringing into existence<sup>14</sup> (i) 'a National University in the Punjab', (ii) revival of classical languages—'Arabic for the Muhammadans, and Sanskrit for the Hindus', (iii) European

10. Proceedings, Home Education, *op. cit.*

11. For the Turkish *Tanzimat* and its relationship with the Punjab education movement, see Nazer Singh. "Some Features of the Socio-Religious Movements in Punjab," in *M.D.U. Research Journal*, Vol. 2, Oct. 1987, pp. 55, 60-61.

12. See, *Report on the Popular Education in the Punjab: Its Dependencies for the Year 1866-67* (hereafter to be called P.E.R.).

13. See 'Extracts from the Parliamentary Report 1874, C. 1072 II, Pt. III, reproduced in G.W. Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab Since Annexation and in 1882*, rpt. Patiala, 1971, Introduction, v-vi.

14. *Ibid.*

Scientific and education works in Urdu, and (iv) social reform movements of European trained educated Hindus and Muslims.

The Calcutta authorities, however, accepted the Punjab proposal for the University and the principles underlying it only half heartedly.<sup>15</sup> They agreed that education should be western though given to the people through their own languages. It was also not averse to people's participation in educational activities but it rejected that they could be given a decisive voice in running their educational affairs.

Were the Punjab chiefs or natural leaders intelligent enough to be comparative in their approach towards the educational question? They raised this question and answered it in the negative. Some of them noted that the Punjab administration was excessively indulgent in politics of education as its scheme amounted to a political revolution in Indian education.<sup>16</sup> Mainly for this reason, the Government of India refused to grant the University to Punjab in 1868.

The refusal meant not only the non-recognition of the Anjuman by Calcutta but also disapproval of its President, Leitner's ideas and actions. It was understandable for these actions were no longer confined to the sphere of education. In fact, Leitner never intended them to be so. Through the Anjuman he was asking for the railway reforms.<sup>17</sup> With the help of L. Griffin, he had started a news organ, *The Indian Public Opinion*.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, he was preparing the Punjab landlords to pick up a battle with Government of India over the issue of tenant rights.<sup>19</sup> The Anjuman had been discussing the ways to conduct this struggle since 1867 and it was guided in it by the lobby of the Punjab officials headed by the Lieutenant Governor, McLeod himself.<sup>20</sup>

On the educational front too Leitner adopted a confrontationist posture. During 1865, he asked the leading Punjabis to organize the Anjuman in order to revive themselves culturally and

15. For details see, Proceedings, Home Education June 12, 1869, Nos. 32-37 (NAI).

16. Proceeding, *ibid.*

17. J. P. Perrile, 'Anjuman-i-Punjab as a Common Interest Association' in *The Panjab Past and Present* Vol. XVI, II, Oct. 1982, pp. 343-70.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 354-60.

civilizationally. For knowledge, they should not look passively to a regime that 'despised' their civilization, he told them.<sup>21</sup> In personal interviews with them, he counselled them to be self-reliant in educational matters by opening educational and literary institutes. After Wood's Despatch, the Government policy provided for public enterprise in education and they could avail themselves of the grant-in-aid system for it, he informed them. Why should the missionaries be left alone in the field to take advantage of the grant-in-aid system? He asked them to ponder over this question. By participating in the educational enterprise they could make it 'national', Leitner inspired them.<sup>22</sup> This talk of 'self reliance' and 'national education' could be, and was, hardly acceptable to the Calcutta establishment for whom education was still an imperial concern.

Leitner had also organized a 'literary and debating society' for the students in his college. He fondly called it 'Young Punjab.'<sup>23</sup> Through his annual reports on Government College, Lahore during 1865-66<sup>24</sup> and 1867-68,<sup>25</sup> he thoroughly disapproved the Calcutta system of education. He wrote that the system was without attraction for, and hold upon, the people.<sup>26</sup> The few students that the college had, were for the stipends they enjoyed.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the Bengal system was discriminatory in matters of scholarship against the 'Punjab boys' for the latter could hardly compete with the educationally advanced Bengal students. Above all, the government was neither funding nor staffing the college properly.<sup>28</sup>

Leitner's actions including these reports and the activities of the Anjuman were not taken favourably by the Education Department. The Punjab D.P.I., Fuller, attributed to him the Lahore people's refusal to study English during 1867.<sup>29</sup> While in fact, they had done it because of the conversion of two students to Christianity by the American Mission. The Lieutenant-Governor expressed his unhappiness with the functioning of Lahore college and advised him (Leitner)

21. See, Extracts from Parliamentary Report, *op. cit.*

22. See, Proceedings, Home-Education, May 22, 1969, Nos. 35-38 (NAI).

23. See, *The P.E.R.*, 1864-65, p. 17.

24. See *The P.E.R.*, 1866-67.

25. See Leitner's Report dt. 23rd May, 1868, in *The P.E.R.*, 1868-69.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. See *The P.E.R.*, 1867-68.

not to let his 'private views on education' to interfere with the proper discharge of his public duties under the existing system.<sup>30</sup> Even this did not deter him from denouncing the Calcutta system which he saw as nothing more than a breeding ground for *babuism*. Characteristic in this regard was his May 23, 1868 report on the Government College, Lahore.<sup>31</sup> The Government took a more serious view of his actions this time. He was not only warned of a summary dismissal but also asked to relinquish the editorship of *Indian Public Opinion*.<sup>32</sup>

During the major part of the 1866-67 session, Leitner remained in Kashmir to which he was deputed by the Punjab Government. He was sent on philological mission of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.

While in Kashmir, he studied the dialects of Gillgit regions, and also translated the biography of *Sheikh Shibli*, an eminent saint of the province.<sup>33</sup> His work on the life and languages of Gillgit was published in 1869 under the title, *Results of a Tour in 'Dardistan', Kashmir, Little Tibet, Ladak etc.*<sup>34</sup> It was popularly called 'Dardistan.'

'Dardistan' had two significant observations made by him. First Leitner suggested that Sanskrit probably originated from the Gillgit dialects. Secondly, Hinduism was as much a proselytizing religion as was Islam.<sup>35</sup> Its Brahmin priesthood was no less active in converting the tribals and Budhists of Kashmir to Brahminism. It is interesting to note that Leitner would extend this view of Hinduism threatening the dissenting creeds in India to Sikhism in the early 1880's.<sup>36</sup>

In the meantime, the Government of India had sanctioned the establishment of 'University College Lahore', in May 1869.<sup>37</sup> The college was a Senate granting diplomas and certificates, and was a council of education for the province. It housed in the Government College Lahore. However, only a few weeks before this declaration,

30. See, Proceedings Home Education, May 22, 1869, *op. cit.*

31. See, *The P.E.R.*, 1868-69.

32. Proceedings May 22, 1869, *op. cit.*

33. See, *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I, 1872, rpt. Delhi, 1984, p. 269.

34. The work was published at the Indian Public Opinion Press, Lahore in 1869.

35. See, Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 58.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29, 35-36, 58.

37. See, E.C. Baily's Letter to Government of Punjab, dt. 22 May, 1869. in Proceedings Home-Education, *op. cit.*

the education department had punished Leitner for his criticism of Government's educational, railway and agrarian policies. Unhappy, he went on a leave from July 1869 to February 1870. He visited England too.

While he was still out of Lahore, the newly constituted Senate held its first meeting in January 1870 where Leitner was appointed its Registrar.

In the meantime was reorganized the Oriental School, Lahore. Originally it was a *pathsala* providing learning in Sanskrit. After the formation of Anjuman-i-Punjab, Arabic and Persian were also added to it. In 1868, it was placed under a superintendent who was always to be a Professor of Sanskrit. When E. Trumpp came to Lahore in connection with his translation of Sikh scriptures in 1870, he was appointed its Superintendent.<sup>38</sup>

All this did not dampen Leitner's spirit of enquiry and he conducted archaeological excavations at Takhat-i-Bahi, near Peshawar. It yielded him 172 pieces of statues, arms, coins and other objects 'referring to the various countries between Kabul and Lhasa.'<sup>39</sup>

Again in 1870, Leitner discovered an Ariano-Pali inscription of Gondophares from a stone at Shahbazgarhi. He sent it to Professor Dowson in England.<sup>40</sup>

When 1871, the Government of India raised 'the Muhammadan question' and asked the provinces to take measures for helping the Muslims in overcoming their religio-cultural prejudices against the English System of education, the Senate of University college adopted a resolution that provided for the establishment of denominational institutions of education not only for the Muslims but for all the communities.<sup>41</sup> It refused to accept the notion that the Punjabi Muslims were especially indifferent to western education. But it reiterated that the people as a whole were cold in their response to a purely secular education.<sup>42</sup> This flaw could be removed by the denominational institutions where the people could have 'secular

38. See, Nazer Singh, Notes, *op. cit.*

39. See, *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 2, 1873 and Vol. 4, 1873 (rpt., Delhi, 1984), pp. 242, 158-60.

40. See, 'Trubner's Records, June 1873, quoted in *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 2, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

41. See, *The P.E.R.*, 1871-72, pp. 1-4.

42. *Ibid.*

education...in addition to any religious teaching.' Interestingly, Leitner saw a great politico-cultural potential in this resolution, and referred it in his report for the year 1871-72.<sup>43</sup>

According to him, the denominational institutions would help in winning the support of priestly classes for the educational programme of the government. The 'Hindu, Muhammadan, English, Anglo-Vernacular, and Vernacular school's would promote 'toleration' and 'create genuine attachment to' it.<sup>44</sup> Also, they would learn to study their own classics 'more critically.' In fact the western sciences would help in realizing them that learning meant something more than 'disloyalty.'<sup>45</sup>

The new or reformed priesthood would work for the government that "will have at its disposal a powerful agency."

The 'Muhammadan Question' led Leitner to pen some important works on education in general and Islamic Culture in particular. The works were:<sup>46</sup>

1. *As Essay on the Theory and Practice of Education with Special Reference to Education in India.*
2. *Races of Turkey with Special Reference to Muhammadan Education.*
3. *Sin in-ul-Islam.*
4. *History of Indlgenous Education in the Punjab Since Annexation and in 1882.*

A common message that ran through these works was that education in India could not be totally secular.<sup>47</sup> Nor could it be entirely state or private.<sup>48</sup> It would be denominational with the reformed priesthood in the shape of teachers-cum-reformers holding a strategic place in it. The education should aim at helping 'the natural leaders' in becoming an agency for social transformation. Unlike C. Pearson,<sup>49</sup> Leitner had a negative bias towards the newly emerging middle classes through English education.

In 1873, Leitner represented Punjab on the Vienna Universal

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

45. *Ibid.*

46. See Proceedings Home-Education, August 1885 Nos. 29-42 (N.A.I.).

47. See, Leitner, *op. cit.*

48. *The P. E. R.*, 1868-69, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-4.

49. *Ibid.*



Exhibition. He carried with him his *Takht-i-Bahi* collection that he introduced to the scholars under the name *Graeco-Budhistlc Sculpture*. This nomenclature was approved by the scholars and he was thanked for giving this term to the Indian antiquity.<sup>50</sup> The exhibition conferred upon him the Grand Diploma of Honor for the promotion of knowledge.

The year 1876 again saw Leitner on a war path against the political establishment. In March, he made a memorial of his grievances to the government. The grievances were :<sup>51</sup>

- (1) The advertisement for the post of Principal in 1864 against which he had applied was misleading because it wrongly gave the impression that there was an Education Service in India providing promotion avenues throughout the country.
- (2) He was not promoted even where he was promotable. This inflicted a loss of rupees 40,180 upon him.
- (3) The government caused more pecuniary loss to him by compelling him to resign from the editorship of *Indian Public Opinion*, and by denying to him the editorship of *The Lahore Chronicle*.

By way of relief Leitner asked for the following :

- (i) He should be promoted and placed on a post lower only to that of Director.
- (ii) Immediate payment of rupees 40,180 to him.
- (iii) He should be made D.P.I. at the earliest.
- (iv) Failing in meeting these demands, the government should pension him off.

Thinking that the government might send him on pension, Leitner started raising subscriptions for opening an 'Oriental Institute' of Indian Studies in London and asked the government patronage for it.<sup>52</sup>

However, the Punjab regime rejected his memorial of grievances as well as his request for patronage to the London institute. Following the Punjab administration, the non-official individuals gave a cold response. With the exception of Attar Singh Bhadour who promised

50. See, Proceedings Home Education, August 1885, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-42.

51. See, Despatch to S. O. S. in Proceedings Home Education, 18th May, 1876, No. 3 (N. A. I.).

52. See, Proceedings Home-Education, August 1885, *op. cit.*

to donate rupees 4000, no aristocrat subscribed to the scheme.<sup>53</sup>

Towards the end of 1876, Leitner was made an Honorary Superintendent of the Oriental College.<sup>54</sup> The government wanted to reorganize it ever since 1872 when it unsuccessfully tried to keep Trumpp in its service by appointing him a teacher of Pushto, Punjabi and some other languages of the regions across the Indus.<sup>55</sup> However, it was the establishment of M.A.O. College at Aligarh, that made this reorganization imperative. Leitner's appointment indicated that the college was no longer to be primarily concerned with Sanskrit or classical studies.

Leitner made two changes in the Oriental College. First, its admission was restricted to the sons of the hereditary priests, the *pandits* and *maulvis*.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, the study of Gurmukhi including instruction in the Sikh scripture was introduced in 1877. Interestingly, the Punjabi class was officially called the 'bhai class', and the introduction of *Guru Granth* was not seen consistent with the government policy. How the Sikh scripture could be taught at a place where the study of Bible was not permitted ? asked the Punjab D.P.I.<sup>57</sup> He also spoke of the unpopularity of the measures with the people in general.

But the remarks of D.P.I. were not endorsed by the Lieutenant-Governor. The latter's Secretary, L. Griffin, noted that the introduction of Punjabi had made the college popular with the Sikhs, and this alone was a sufficient justification for it.<sup>58</sup> The D.P.I. was asked not to be impatient with the college. He saw the point and reported that 'the progress of 'the bhai class' was a matter of 'gratification' to him, and it was satisfying to 'certain sections' of the community.<sup>59</sup>

It is important to remember that E. Trumpp was the first to suggest that Punjabi should be cultivated as 'a national language' of the Punjab<sup>60</sup> in order to make the Sikhs aware of their true religious heritage. This suggestion was adopted by the Singh

53. *Ibid.*

54. See, *The P. E. R.*, 1876-77.

55. See, L. H. Griffin's Letter dt. 11 January, 1872, *Proceedings Fore-Gen; A*, 1872, Nos. 110-14 (N. A. I.)

56. See, Nazer Singh, *Notes, op. cit.*, p. 39.

57. *The P. E. R.*, 1878-79, p. 2; also 1877-78, p. 29.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *The P. E. R.*, 1878-79, p. 14.

60. *Leitner, History, op. cit.*, pp. 31, 33-36, 47-48.

Sabha that interpreted Sikh heritage as something different from both Kukaism and Hinduism. The decision to patronize Gurmukhi in 1877 was not educational alone, it had a political dimension too.<sup>61</sup>

The political dimension was indicated further when the Punjab officials including Leitner refused to patronize the works of Swami Dayanand in 1877 itself.<sup>62</sup> The Swami was asking for it since 1875 and he had reiterated his demand on his arrival in Lahore in April 1877.<sup>63</sup> As a matter of fact, Leitner had come into clash with the Arya Samaj even before the birth of its Lahore branch for some of the leading men who organized this branch were already his college and other opponents. The most significant of them was Mul Raj, M.A.

The Punjab administration had created in Delhi and Lahore a strong opposition to itself as well as for Leitner by declaring on the eve of Lytton's Delhi Darbar in January 1877 that the Lahore University College would be elevated to University while Delhi College stood closed.<sup>64</sup> It explained its closure decision saying that by transferring the staff of Delhi College to Lahore, it wanted to strengthen the Lahore College. This explanation did not find favour with some Delhi citizens who backed by the member of Delhi Literary Society organized an agitation against it.<sup>65</sup> Mul Raj was one of them. Soon Syed Ahmed Khan and Surendra Nath Banerjee extended their support to the agitation.<sup>66</sup> In Lahore Pandit Manphool, a leading member of the Anjuman-i-Punjab, helped the Delhi people. It was he who had invited Swami Dayanand to extend his Delhi visit to Lahore. Others from Lahore who showed this early interest in Dayanand's mission were Kanhya Lal Alkhdhi and Novin Chander Roy.<sup>67</sup>

Novin Chander Roy was a leading Brahmo employed at the University College as well as Oriental College. He was also associated with Pandit Radhakishan in the task of organizing Sanskrit studies by the Anjuman-i-Punjab since 1868.<sup>68</sup> In 1877, he established in

61. The political events like the rise of Kuka Movement in Punjab and the second Afghan War had made Pushto and Punjabi militarily significant for the British regime.

62. See, Nazer Singh, Notes, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

68. *The P. E. R.*, 1868-69.

Lahore a branch of the Indian Association of Calcutta. The Association was the creation of Surendranath Banerjee who did not approve of the Punjab decision to close down the Delhi College. Hence, the Lahore Indian Association, like the Lahore Arya Samaj began its career as an opposition to Leitner.<sup>69</sup>

The struggle to influence the educational institutions was, however, not confined to Brahmo and Arya Samajis. The missionaries were doing it since long.<sup>70</sup> Their latest attempt was the scheme for a Cambridge Mission College (St. Stephens College) to be established in Delhi. The Bishop of Lahore, T.V. French, was asking the men in London in 1877 to help the Mission in order to save education in India from falling into the hands of Dayanand's followers.<sup>71</sup> A recent commentator suggests that the Punjab decision to close down the Delhi College was undertaken in order to facilitate the birth of the Mission College.<sup>72</sup>

Be as it may, the fact remains that the education movement in Punjab was marked by partisanism giving birth to 'parties' in it. Aware of the existence of the 'parties', Leitner suggested in 1878 that the government should hold an 'Educational Congress' to sort out the issues.<sup>73</sup> This proposal was rejected by the education department. Leitner charged the Govt. of suppressing the Congress of the school masters with a view to perpetuate differences among the various 'parties' by not allowing them to sit around a table to negotiate with one another.<sup>74</sup>

In April 1879, Lord Lytton told the people of Lahore that soon would be introduced the Punjab University Bill in the Imperial Legislature, and that the new University would be different from other Indian universities in that it would give due place to Indian languages and religions on its departments.<sup>75</sup> This declaration strengthened the hands of 'all the supporters of the movement in favour of a

69. Nazer Singh, *Notes, op. cit.*, p. 51.

70. See, John C. Webster, *The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India*, Macmillan, 1976, *passim*.

71. Naranjani Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires, 1803-1931*, Oxford, Delhi, 1973, p. 8.

72. *Ibid.*

73. For details, see, *The P. E. R.*, 1878-79; also *History, passim*.

74. *Ibid.*

75. Nazer Singh, *Notes, op. cit.*, p. 40.

national education. . . .<sup>76</sup>

In a bid to minimise the differences among the various 'parties' in Punjab, Leitner was temporarily made D. P. I. in July 1879. He was to hold this post till September 1879. However, this did not help much.<sup>77</sup>

The argument of 'national education' did not cut ice with the Brahmos, the Aryas and some Anjumanees who opposed the Viceroy's declaration. The reasons for them to do so were many and different. The Brahmos—many of whom were Bengalis—opposed it on the ground that the new University would discourage the study of English and would split the University of Calcutta that would sever the cultural emotional link between Punjab and Bengal.<sup>78</sup> As it were they who dominated the Lahore Indian Association so it also maintained that an alien government had no right to create literature for the local people.<sup>79</sup> Nor could be revived the Indian languages by mere translation of the European works in them. The Aryas opposed it mainly because of Leitner's opposition to their movement, though they also advanced the arguments given by the Brahmos.<sup>80</sup> Interestingly, the Aryas were hardly united in their opposition to 'Leitnerism.'

Leitner tried to meet these arguments through the *Akhbar-i-Anjuman Punjab*. He denied that Anjuman-i-Punjab was opposed to the study of English language.<sup>81</sup> He only demanded that the University must had a faculty of Theology and should cultivate Punjabi language. This brought Sir Syed Ahmed on the scene. He was already finding it difficult to defend Urdu against Nagari. Now, Leitner was leading the Punjabi Muslims to leave Urdu for Gurmukhi, he felt. Through his writings in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, he asked the Punjabis in general and the Muslims in particular, to keep themselves aloof from Leitner's movement.<sup>82</sup>

However, the newly organized Lahore Singh Sabha stood by Leitner in his struggle against the Brahmos, Aryas, a faction of the

76. Proceedings Home-Education, A, August 1879, Nos. 21-27 (NAI).

77. *The P. E. R.*, 1879-80.

78. See, Nazer Singh, *Notes*, pp. 51, 54-56.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-55.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-46.

Indian Association, and a group of the *Anjumanees*.<sup>83</sup>

The opposition to the Punjab educational policy virtually degenerated into an opposition to Leitner during 1880-81. The public meetings were held in Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi to criticize him, and to demand more English education.<sup>84</sup> The Brahmo and Arya *Babus* as well as the teachers in the Mission schools helped in it by drawing memorials and petitions. The students were asked, especially in Lahore, to teach him a 'lesson.' Leitner's own college turned out to be a centre of Brahmo-Arya activities.<sup>85</sup>

The Punjab Brahmos and Aryas sought help from Bengal. It came, first, in the shape of *The Tribune* which was launched in February 1881 to save education—English/higher—in Punjab.<sup>86</sup> Secondly, the Calcutta branch of Indian Association approached the London authorities to intervene in the matter. In vain they were reminded of Lord Macaulay and his educational ideas.<sup>87</sup>

*The Tribune*, not only denounced the politico-educational ideas of Leitner, by labelling them as 'spurious orientalism' but also condemned the Singh Sabha by describing it as 'a creature of Dr Leitner.'<sup>88</sup> The paper repeatedly saw the demand for the cultivation of Punjabi by the University as a 'sectarian' one.<sup>89</sup>

In the meantime, Leitner once again tried to get his old grievances redressed by the government through a memorial in 1880.<sup>90</sup> But the memorial was dismissed at a time when he was in the thick of struggle against the whole Lahore intelligentsia save the few *Anjumanees* and the Singh Sabha reformers.

Leitner chose to hit back. The Hunter Commission on primary education gave him the opportunity. He collected a massive evidence on the destruction of indigenous system of education in the land of five rivers. He was helped in this task by his men at the Oriental College, by the Anjuman-i-Punjab and the Police Department.<sup>91</sup>

83. See *The Tribune*, Lahore, August 27 and October 23, 1881.

84. See Nazer Singh, Notes, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-58.

85. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-56,

88. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-68.

89. *Ibid.*

90. *Ibid.*

91. *Proceedings Home Education 1885, op. cit.*

The latter provided him with the *thana*-wise accounts of indigenous educational institutions as well as the teachers and scholars of Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and Gurmukhi.

Leitner interpreted this data in the light of his own experience of the operations of education department. His theories of education in general too guided him. Consequently his evidence was rich empirically and theoretically. He himself presented it before the Commission, and later on published it under the title, *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab Since Annexation and in 1882*.

Two salients of Leitner's History were, (i) a strong advocacy of Gurmukhi education aimed at strengthening the Sikhs against the middle class Hindus, actively working for the creation of a 'nation' based upon Hindi language.<sup>92</sup> and (ii) strong condemnation of the operations of the Punjab education department on the various grounds. Some of these grounds were the following :<sup>93</sup>

- (i) The department deliberately destroyed the Persian and Gurmukhi education in particular and Sanskrit and Arabic systems of education in general.<sup>94</sup>
- (ii) It undermined the religious and national foundations of education and projected Indian languages and literature as useless and even barbrous—as in the case of Gurmukhi.<sup>95</sup>
- (iii) It ignored 'the natural leaders'—zamindars, merchants and priests and sought to create new leaders out of the trading castes such as Khatris, Kayasths and Soods.<sup>96</sup>
- (iv) The trading castes were used to denationalize and secularize knowledge. They demanded more and more English education in order to dislodge the Brahmins, the Muslims and the Sikhs from social pre-eminence.<sup>97</sup>
- (v) Westernization based upon secularism had created fanaticism especially among the Muslims who were deliberately deprived of teachers' job by the education department by

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-36; also p. 31, 47-48.

93. See "Remarks by W. R. M. Holroyd on the Evidence of Dr Leitner Before the Education Commission," in *Proceedings Home Education*, B, September 1883, Nos. 49-53 (N. A. I.).

94. *Ibid.*, also *History*, pp. 31, 36.

95. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-36.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 21-22.

97. *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 58-59, also p. 19.

closing Persian and ignoring Arabic schools in the 1850's.<sup>98</sup>

- (vi) The department betrayed 'the oriental movement' by adopting a dual-policy towards the Anjuman-i-Punjab. The organizers of it wanted to make education a public enterprise run by the people's representatives but they actually got 'a highly autocratic' system that could not tolerate even a 'teachers Congress' in 1878.<sup>99</sup> It divided the Anjuman, and created 'parties in education' that virtually killed it as a body for common enterprise.
- (vii) The British did not only destroy the indigenous system of education but also spent very little on English or new system. The people were kept illiterate. There were more illiterates in Punjab of 1882 than that of 1849.<sup>100</sup>

While the education department was taking cognizance of these grave charges against itself, Leitner unsuccessfully revived his scheme of 'oriental institute' in London. Finding no change in the government's attitude to his scheme, he left for England in 1883. In London he tried to gather support for it. In this connection he met Max Muller and E. Trumpp also.<sup>101</sup> He returned to Lahore in 1884 without getting anything concrete from his London friends.

Back in Lahore, Leitner became greater critic of the Panjab University for its policy of keeping theology and Punjabi away from its faculties. He pleaded the cause of Punjabi from the Singh Sabha platform.<sup>102</sup>

In June 1885, the Anjuman-i-Punjab demanded the reorganization of the Senate of Panjab University.<sup>103</sup> Representation on it was sought for the 'professors of the Oriental College', 'learned *Maulvis*' and '*Pandits*.'<sup>104</sup> Leitner had still not recognized the University as established in 1882.

The Punjab administration took his measure as something aimed at obstructing the progress of the University and decided to get rid of

98. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

99. See 'Remarks by W. R. M. Holroyd,' *op. cit.*

100. See *History, Introduction, op. cit.*

101. Proceedings Home-Education, 1885, *op. cit.*

102. See Nazer Singh, *Notes, op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

103. Proceedings Home Education, August 1885, *op. cit.*

104. *Ibid.*



Leitner. He was induced to apply for pension on medical grounds.<sup>105</sup> The moment he did so, he was sent on deputation with the Government of India in Foreign Department.<sup>106</sup> They later despatched him on a philological mission to Kashmir. He remained in Kashmir from August 1885 to September 1886.<sup>107</sup>

In his absence from Lahore, the government asked the Anjuman to vacate its office in the rooms of University.<sup>108</sup> In fact, the University snapped its ties with the Anjuman by appropriating to itself the money raised through subscriptions by Leitner's movement.<sup>109</sup> In order to financially cripple the Anjuman more, the University stopped sending its print material for publication to the Anjuman Press.<sup>110</sup>

In the meantime, the London authorities turned down the positive Punjab recommendation on Leitner's pension application. It put the Lahore in an embarrassing situation because it was the Punjab administration that had originally induced him to apply for pension. In order to wriggle out itself from it, the administration implicated him in a false case made by the Police Department. Leitner was charged of instigating the people of Lahore against the British power and was dismissed.

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105. *Ibid.*

106. Proceedings Foreign-Frontier, A, April 1887, Nos. 16-46 (N.A.I.).

107. *Ibid.*

108. Proceedings, For. Intel., B., Sept. 1886, Nos. 75-79 (N.A.I.).

109. *Ibid.*

110. *Ibid.*

## Woollen Textile Industry in the Punjab under the Raj

SIMRAN HUNDAL\*

Woollen textile manufactures constituted an important industry from time immemorial in the Punjab province. Woollen textiles apart from being an important item of clothing also figured in export trade of the province and continued to enable the State to meet the requirements of its courts, civil administration and armed forces in different periods. During the Mughal rule in Punjab, shawls of special texture were made at Lahore.<sup>1</sup> During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign, the vast regular and irregular forces were supplied with winter uniforms. Woollen manufactures were purchased to meet the needs of the royal households. On few occasions the Maharaja made purchases for commercial purposes, for example, after signing of the Indus Navigation Treaty, he sent to Bombay 30 to 35 Boats loaded with shawls for sale in foreign lands. The woollen manufactures were granted full protection against harassment. In Kashmir a regular control office was in existence which was charged with the responsibility of ensuring high standards of shawl manufactures. This control office was known as dagshal.<sup>2</sup> The object of the present paper is to discuss the position of woollen textile Industry after the establishment of the British rule in the Punjab.

In the Punjab, the chief centres for the production of woollen cloth were Kashmir, Kulu, Kangra, Shimla, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Jalalpur Jattan, Sialkot, Lahore, Derajat, Kohat, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Dinanagar, Kanjrur, Panipat and Hissar.

Woollen manufactures consisted of blankets, coarse woollen blank-

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1. Bakshish Singh Nijjar, *Punjab under the Sultans, 1000-1526 A.D.*, Delhi, 1968, pp. 123-24.
2. Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society under Ranjit Singh*, Delhi, 1982, pp. 236-237.

ets called *lois*, stout woollen cloth or flannels termed '*pattu*', fine pashmina cloth called '*alwan*', large bags called '*khurjas*', mats for floor called *asan*, rugs called '*shatrangis*.' Woollen manufactures were made from following varieties : (i) "Pashmina" Thibat goat hair or of Kirmani wool and Rampur wool, (ii) Country sheep wool, (iii) Goat and camel hair. The term "Pashm" was applied to shawl wool of several varieties in use. Firstly, the genuine Thibat shawl wool of Kashmir. Secondly, the Changthani wool. Thirdly, the Kirmani wool, imported from Kirman, a province of Persia. Fourthly, "Kabuli Pashm" produced in the mountainous portions of Kandhar and Herat. Fifthly, '*Un Rampuri*' obtained from Rampur, probably from Changthan and Rodokh in Thibat. Regular shawls were woven from finely spun of Pashmina threads. The other class of Pashmina goods were fine Pashmina cloth called '*alwan*' used for shawls or *chaddars*. Carefully felted and softened Pashmina cloth called '*malida*' was used for variety of articles and formed the ground work of the silk embroidered *chogas*, jackets, neck-ties.<sup>3</sup>

The loom-woven shawls of Kashmir were divided into two classes. Firstly, shawls, *Tiliwala*, '*Tilakar*' or '*Kani Kar*' where the pattern was produced in the loom, sometimes woven all in one piece, but often in distinct portions which were afterwards joined together by hand. Secondly, shawls '*amlakar*' wherein the ground work was a plain Pashmina piece and pattern was minute and elaborate needle-work in Pashmina thread all over the whole surface. Many Kashmiris had migrated from their homes and settled in cities of Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana and Jalalpur (Gujrat district) Dinanagar (Gurdaspur district), Narpur and Tiloknath (Kangra district). These people had migrated at various times from Kashmir due to famine which raged in Kashmir when General Mihan Singh was governor of Kashmir under Maharaja Ranjit Singh between 1832-1842. The Kashmiri colonist settling in towns of Punjab plied their craft there. Shawls were also woven at Amritsar, which were nearest in excellence to the ones woven in the Kashmir Valley.<sup>4</sup>

Ludhiana was noted for manufacturing plain shawls or wrappers called '*Rampur Chaddars*.'<sup>5</sup> Lahore had a special manufacturer of

3. B. H. Baden Powell, *Hand Book of the Manufactures and Arts of the Punjab*, Vol 2, Lahore, 1872, pp. 26-29, 33-34.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 41, 43.

5. W. W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol VI, London, 1881, p. 102.

'*Lahori Chaddars*.'<sup>6</sup> Goat and camel's hair were employed in making sundry articles, such as nose bags for horses, bags called *jhul* for carrying grains, stout *pattu* or matting and occasionally ropes. In the Derajat, Sirsa and Gugaria, goat hair was employed for making large bags or (*khurjas*) and ornaments with which in these places camels and horses were decorated, made of plaits and tassels of goat hair.<sup>7</sup> Coarse blankets called '*bora*' and mats for the floor called '*asan*' were made of goats hair in Peshawar.<sup>8</sup> Felts were manufactured at Kohat.<sup>9</sup> *Shatrangis* or rugs were woven by Biloch women in Dera Ghazi Khan. Woollen camel bags were woven in the border hills of Dera Ghazi Khan.<sup>10</sup>

In Amritsar the fabrics woven of pashm wool were either plain, self-coloured cloth known as *alwan*, *malida* either white, blue, smoke or red coloured. Shawls were also woven of pashm, plain or embroidered some known as *Rampur Chaddars*.<sup>11</sup> At Kanjur in Shakargarh of Gurdaspur district, *garbi chaddars* of pashm and cotton mixed were made by Kashmiris working in looms. Also at Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district *lois* of pashm and raffal mixed were manufactured. The pashm came from Nurpur in Kangra and the raffal yarn was imported from Germany.<sup>12</sup> The Hissar district was famous for manufacture of embroidered woollen *orhans* or *chaddars* which were good and characteristic in effect.<sup>13</sup>

In Shimla district at Sabathu, a colony of Kashmiris manufactured *alwan-lois* or woollen sheets and so called *Rampur Chaddars*.<sup>14</sup> In Jalalpur in Gujrat district, the making of shawls was one of the

6. *Gazetteer of the Lahore District*, 1893-94. Calcutta, p. 97.

7. B. H. Badan Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

8. *Ibid.*, p. viii.

9. H. St. G. Tucker, *Report on the Settlement of the Kohat District in the Punjab*, Calcutta, 1884, p. 127.

10. *Gazetteer of the Dera Ghazi Khan District*, 1883-84, Calcutta, n. d., p. 90.

11. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Amritsar District*, Vol. XX A, Lahore, 1914, pp. 106-07.

12. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Gurdaspur District*, 1914. Vol. XXI A, Lahore, 1915, pp. 138-39.

13. P. J. Fagan, *Punjab District Gazetteers, Hissar District*, 1892, Vol. IIA Lahore, 1916, p. 176.

14. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Simla District*, 1888-89, Vol. VIIIA, Part A, Lahore, 1908, p. 82.

chief industry.<sup>15</sup> Shawls of pashm were produced at Kila Sobha Singh in Sialkot district.<sup>16</sup> Ludhiana was famous for pashmina industry. The pashmina manufactures included Rampur *chaddars* made of pure wool in two sizes, one size being 4 yards by 2 yards, the best quality was sold at Rs. 60/- and second at Rs. 25/- each. The best quality were known as viceregal *chaddars* or ring shawls.<sup>17</sup> In Panipat in Karnal district blankets of excellent quality were made by the *Kambli*s or blanket makers.<sup>18</sup> In the Bashahar state in Simla district good blankets were made.<sup>19</sup> In Muzaffargarh district country blankets of sheeps wool were woven by local weavers.<sup>20</sup> In Kahuta tahsil of Rawalpindi district, blankets were manufactured.<sup>21</sup> Felt rugs were made at Khushab and Bhera in Shahpur district.<sup>22</sup> Black blankets were made largely in Ludhiana tahsil by Mazhabis and Chamars and were purchased as horse blankets by native cavalry regiments as well as were in demand by the cultivators of the district. Check and white blankets were made by the Mahamadan butchers of Jagraon in Ludhiana district. There was a small manufacture of namdahs in Ludhiana.<sup>23</sup>

Woollen manufactures were valuable commercially as they figured important export items of the province, giving boost to internal and external trade of the province. The shawls of Amritsar and Gujrat were sold in London and in France in considerable numbers.<sup>24</sup> In the year 1850 the total yearly value of shawls exported from Amritsar to Europe was 85,000 to 1,00,000 sterlings. In 1863,

15. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Gujrat District, 1921*, Vol. XXVA, Lahore, 1921, p. 104.

16. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XII, London, 1908, p. 331.

17. *Punjab District Gazetteer, Ludhiana District and Malerkotla State, 1904*, Lahore, 1904, p. 155.

18. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Karnal District, 1918*, Vol. VI-A, Lahore, 1919, p. 134.

19. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Simla District, 1904*, Vol. VIIIA, Part A, p. 82.

20. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Muzaffargarh District, 1908*, Vol. XXXIVA, Lahore, 1910, p. 146.

21. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Rawalpindi, District, 1907*, Vol. XXVIII A, Lahore, 1909, p. 170.

22. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XXII, London, 1908, p. 218.

23. *Punjab District Gazetteers Ludhiana District and Malerkotla State, 1904*. Vol. XVA, p. 155.

24. B. H. Baden Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

the value of the shawls from Amritsar sold in London was £2,26,279.<sup>25</sup> Rampur *chaddars* manufactured in Ludhiana were sold all over India, value of the exported *chaddars* was estimated at Rs. 1,15,000 yearly.<sup>26</sup> Blankets manufactured in Panipat were sold at Delhi, Lahore, Amritsar, even to Peshawar, Agra and Simla.<sup>27</sup> Shawls manufactured in Amritsar were sold in Haidarabad in Deccan, Lucknow, Delhi and the Native States of Rajputana.<sup>28</sup>

Shortly after the establishment of British rule in the Punjab the woollen industry began to decline rapidly owing to growing competition of machine made woollens both indigenous and foreign.<sup>29</sup> In Ludhiana, the shawls industry (Shal-bafi) or weaving from pashm thread of Kashmiri shawls, which was the most important branch of all, never recovered from complete shortage of the trade in these articles caused by Franco-Prussian War. France which was the principal customer had ceased to take any since 1870. In 1904, there were only 10 Kashmiris who turned out the Kamarbands worn by native cavalry. All the shawl work was done in coarse wool and known as Jamewar, used as door hangings and also given to menial servants. Native States used to take them for dresses of honour, nevertheless, the pashmina trade was on the whole on decline.<sup>30</sup> By 1914 shawl manufacture in Amritsar had declined. As fashion changed, adulteration in raw wool began, the trade began to dwindle down. The wearing of shawls was given up in Paris, consequently the rest of the Europe followed the lead of that city. The pure woollen shawl was now being replaced by a cheaper quality known as raffal which was imported direct to Amritsar from Germany.<sup>31</sup>

By 1947, the pashmina manufactures in Amritsar had been ousted by the power looms introduced by the woollen mills. The pashmina shawl industry was practically killed by the imported shawls from

25. G. S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Panjab (1849-1901)*, Jullundur City, 1962, p. 207.

26. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Ludhiana District and Malerkotla State, 1904*, Vol. XVA, p. 155.

27. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Karnal District, 1918*, Vol. VI-A, p. 134.

28. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Amritsar District*, Vol. XXA, Lahore, 1914, p. 107.

29. B. S. Saini, *The Social and Economic History of Punjab 1901-1939*, Delhi, 1975, p. 286.

30. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Ludhiana District and Malerkotla State, 1904*, Vol. XVA, p. 156.

31. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Amritsar District*, Vol. XXA, 1914, p. 107.

France and Germany which had a better finish and were considerably cheap.<sup>32</sup> The wool industry in Gurdaspur district had declined in the later years of 1914 in face of the competition of cheap shoddy articles of European manufacture.<sup>33</sup> *The Census Report for 1911* made the following observation on woollen manufacture :

"The wool industry is still of importance in this province although it appears to be on wane. The total number of persons supported by it has fallen from 32,381 to 17,023 or by 47 per cent during the past decade. The cheap imported woollen goods and those manufactures at Dhariwal are gradually replacing the crude indigenous product. In the higher classes, furs, pattus and padded cotton cloaks have gone completely out of fashion and the local blankets (*lois, dhusas, bhuras* etc.), are giving way to cheap foreign blankets."<sup>34</sup>

A temporary boost to woollen manufacture was provided by the Swadeshi Movement in 1905. During the Swadeshi Movement in Punjab, the Kashmir *pattas, ruffs, malidas*, the Dhariwal flannels, the Kulu and Kaghana blankets, and Amritsar and Ludhiana shawls and *lois* were quite popular.<sup>35</sup> Despite temporary boost provided by Swadeshi Movement in 1905, the number of actual workers engaged in the wool industry decreased from 3,924 in 1921 to 3,128 in 1931.<sup>36</sup> The Indian Tariff Board (Woollen and Textile Industry) pointed to the languishing state of industry and wrote, "The profits of the industry were everywhere on decline as the hand weavers found it increasingly difficult to compete with cheap shoddy articles of Europe which beguile the simple customers by their excellent feel and finish. The decline of the industry could be inferred from the continuous fall in number of persons engaged in it. They numbered 42,048 in 1867, 32,381 in 1901, 17,023 in 1911 and 13,394 in 1934. Mr. Badenoch held the competition of imported piece goods responsible

32. A. Macfarquhar, *Punjab District Gazetteers, Amritsar District*, Chandigarh, 1974, pp. 169, 170.

33. *Punjab District Gazetteers, Gurdaspur District*, 1914, Vol. XXI A, p. 140.

34. Pandit Hari Kishan Kaul, *Census of India, 1911, Punjab*, Vol. XIV, Part I, Lahore, 1912, p. 500.

35. S. C. Mittal, *Freedom Movement in Punjab (1905-29)*, Delhi, 1977, p. 23.

36. Ahmad Hasan Khan, *Census of India, 1931, Punjab*, Vol. XVII, Part I, Lahore, 1933, p. 241.

for the decline of once flourishing shawl industry at Jalalpur Jattan (Gujrat district) and the *garbi loi* industry at Sialkot.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the woollen textile industry played a significant role in improving economy of the State. As the woollen manufactures figured as important items in the external and internal trade of province and enabled the State to earn huge profits. It also provided opportunities of gainful employment to a large section of population engaged in woollen industry. However the woollen textile industry got set back when machine made woollen products both indigenous and foreign penetrated the urban and rural areas. The machine made products had a fine finish and were considerably cheap. Change in fashion also cut into the prospects of woollen manufactures.

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37, B. S. Saini, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-83.



## Henry Mead as a Historian of the Mutiny of 1857

SKINDER KAUR\*

The Revolt of 1857 is the one of the most important events in the history of India. Since the event took place it has remained a subject of controversy among the historians and academicians. Henry Mead was the first author to write on this subject. The first work about this episode was an angry book, written as a strong criticism of British policy and Mead was its author. It is a comprehensive account of the Revolt of 1857, before its course was actually over.

Henry Mead was a backwoodman and had spent nearly ten years in India as a journalist. For some times, he edited *The Friend of India*. Mead was one of the most frank critics of the policies of the Government of India. For the Sepoy Revolt he laid the blame on the doors of the British administration in India. Mead started his work with an explicit feeling of an injured moral sense that wrong had been done to man and nation. He blamed Britain of 'earth hunger',<sup>1</sup> and an incessant craving for annexing land in India. Henry frankly admitted that the British rule in India was guilty of cruelty, oppression and many other follies.<sup>2</sup> He saw the revolt as a heavy punishment<sup>3</sup> for the British, because of their misdeeds and wrong policies. He felt anguished, when called a 'martyr' or accused of writing in the tune of an inspired person. He thought that he was never wrong as an Indian journalist either in purse or prospects. Mead placed himself in the category of a political agitator in the

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1. Mead Henry, *The Sepoy Revolt, its Causing, its Consequences*, London, 1858. First edition published in 1857, Preface to the first edition. pp. iii, iv.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

public service with the writing of his 'Sepoy Revolt.' He wrote like a provocateur. He was accused of being partisan and having an animus against Lord Canning and Government in his 'Sepoy Revolt.'<sup>4</sup> He refuted such accusations and stressed his self righteousness.

In fact, he represented the utilitarian zeal for efficiency. He strongly believed that this episode was a culmination of the grave defects in the military policy and organisation of the East India Company. Mead noticed the lack of discipline in the army. He wrote, 'the notoriously relaxed state of military discipline forbids to the idea that ill-usage has any thing to do with the Revolt. The general regulations for the Government of the army have been so constantly modified of late years in favour of the Sepoy that scarcely a trace of subordination remaind in practice, but little of it in theory.'<sup>5</sup> He pointed out that there was 'genenal contempt entertained by the Sepoys for authority,'<sup>6</sup> and total absence of 'All power' on the part of commanding officer to reward or punish.<sup>7</sup> Mead criticised the policy of the East India Company in entrusting the command of the military to old and worn out men, as the youngest major-general of the companies service in command of division had been 50 years old commissioned officer.<sup>8</sup> When General Hewitt allowed the rebels to escape at Meerut. Mead saw the incapacity of the system and the old age of the man responsible. Henry felt convinced that there were definite draw backs in the government and military system, which led to the dissatisfaction among the Sepoys and the consequent revolt. He strongly asserted: "We hold that rebellion can never break out amongst people, unless their rulers are greatly at fault," and we are equally convinced that 'Mutiny would never show itself in a regiment, where the officers knew their duty, and performed it.'<sup>9</sup>

Mead's analysis of the causes of the Mutiny, led him to believe that greased cartridges were the main cause of the revolt. He also believed that the British Military Officials had tried to allay the fears of the Hindus and Muslims. Had they not been forced to use the

4. *Ibid.*, p. II.

5. *Ibid.*, Preface to second edition, p. 33.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

greased cartridges they could have bought the stuff themselves to their satisfaction. Henry was convinced that none of the greased cartridges had got into the hands of the Sepoys at the various schools of instruction.<sup>10</sup> However the Sepoys blamed that the Government had the design to convert the natives to Christianity with the help of the new cartridges.<sup>11</sup> In an assessment of the situation at Delhi, he stated that, it is unlikely that the revolt would have happened but for the local grievance of the greased cartridge.<sup>12</sup>

In his 'Sepoy Revolt' Henry wrote as a champion of liberalism and an enlightened paternalist. He wrote like a missionary of English Civilization in India. In his opinion the English were bound to enlighten all about social reforms, concerning the British role he stated, "whence did they get authority to do this?" Not from the *Shastras* or the lips of Brahmins. Not from Rajas's or the native community. They walked by the light, and acted by the force of civilisation. They imposed the ideas of humanity and liberty upon the ignorant and weak. There were no waiting for the national sanction.<sup>13</sup> He showed a strong imperialist sentiment that Britain was showering on India the blessing of the British liberty, the British character and civilisation. They knew what was best for India.

Henry Mead wrote during the Mutiny and he held Lord Canning responsible for the same. He called appointment of this Governor General on evil hour for the country.<sup>14</sup> Earlier he had praised Dalhousie's achievements. In his view Lord Canning was unable to guard human life and the national prestige and was responsible for the 'Massacre of Cawnpur and protracted horrors of Lucknow.'<sup>15</sup> He pleaded for denouncement of the man's public conduct and hoped that 'Lord Canning may implore in vain from this generation, and from posterity, the mercy of oblivion.'<sup>16</sup> He criticised Lord Canning for adopting 'No alarm' theory while the position of British in India was in jeopardy. Mead cited an instance that when, on the 15th May *Hurkaru* published the anxiety about the bad news from Meerut, the Englishman was instructed to 'contradict this the next morning.'<sup>17</sup>

10. *Ibid.*, 39.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Mead thought that Lord Canning knowingly concealed the news from public and later he became habitual of hiding facts.<sup>18</sup> Such a habit gave the natives "A handle for inculcating all types of false rumours."<sup>19</sup> Consequently, the British had to choose only between the tales of the *bazar* and the bulletins of Government and usually gave the largest credence to the former."<sup>20</sup> Henry accused Lord Canning of not using available possible exertions to obtain more troops despite warnings. He tried to establish the above charge by vastly quoting the figures of military man in all stations and support the verdict of *The English Man* that every act of Indian Government could be stamped as either insufficient', or 'too late.'<sup>21</sup> For example Mead related how Jung Bhadur of 'Nepal had been sent back once and then recalled for the second time.' The latter exclaimed 'how do you expect to keep India with such rulers as these.'<sup>22</sup> Henry accused Canning of failure to deny proclamation of the king of Delhi, and not trying to convince the Indians that the English Government had no desire to interfere with the native religion. Again, he observed that Lord Canning was hesitant in punishing the 19th Native Infantry including capital punishment in the case of the quarterguard of the 19th. He indicted the conduct of Canning in the same manner as a judge does in a trial. He went to the extent of pronouncing the judgement that 'Lord Canning has been more efficiently of the Great Mogul,'<sup>25</sup> of all Indian potentates and the cause of Mutiny. He had not derived more support from Government House, in Calcutta than from the Royal Palace of Delhi. In making a curious comparison of Lord Canning and Sir John Lawrence he elaborated the differences, and observed. "The difference between Lord Canning and Sir John Lawrence lies simply in this, that one never succeeded, and the other never failed in anything he undertook. The contrast between the two shows something marvellous. But for Sir John Lawrence Delhi would not have been taken, but for Lord Canning, Cawnpure would not have fallen. The one creates

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18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*, p. 85

21. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

means, the other only dissipates them."<sup>26</sup> As an immediate response to the Mutiny, he tried to bring the paternalist of the Punjab to the height of favour in popular estimation as the Punjab system of Lawrence stemmed and hurled back the tide of revolt.

In his version of the Mangal Panday incident and the different stories which he wrote about warnings by Indian Sepoy about the coming Mutiny, Mead appeared to believe in conspiracy and a fore-planning of the Mutiny. Though considering naturally an organised conspiracy he saw an understanding behind it. He wrote: "Perhaps no actual conspiracy was formed to carry out a plan of assault such as has been suggested, but it is certain that an understanding involving an attack on Fort William and the murder of the European Officials generally was come to"<sup>27</sup> Excluding the above type of understanding, he saw no plot behind the Mutiny after describing many events, he observed. "Such examples, which might be multiplied to almost any extent, show beyond all questions that there never was any plot and even amongst the Mussulmans to rise against the English Government. Each man found at last a reason to his liking for Mutiny and murder. There was neither a unity of feeling nor a common purpose amongst them at the outset of the insurrection."<sup>28</sup> In his opinion there was no plot to start a rebellion, and 'The out break was the result of a sudden impulse hardened into purpose and plan by the sense of general disaffection.'<sup>29</sup> Henry thought that Muslim Sepoy's wanted to rise for the recovery of their past territories.<sup>30</sup> Both the communities resented the greased cartridges. The common grievances led to Hindu Muslim unity in revolt, as they 'had a common cause to defend and coalesced as a matter of course, just as Archbishops Summer and M'Hale would unite if perial.<sup>31</sup> Mead wrote that the Mahommdan element in the ranks of the native army was no more a counter poise to the power of the Hindus, and two could thoroughly fraternise when the object was to 'destroy a common foe.'<sup>32</sup> Mead saw the Sikhs as haters of both Hindus and Mussulams. He believed that they could be 'Safely

26. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

trusted under wise restrictions for the future.<sup>33</sup> He thought that any time in future the Sikhs could be used against the Hindus and Mussulams. A similar view he had about the Bengal Sepoys. In his characterisation: "These men ever have been and will continue to be the willing tools of power, no matter how it was acquired or in what way it was exercised. They have no regard for deposed Raja's and no pity for tortured *ryots*. The word patriotism has no place in their vocabulary."<sup>34</sup> After the trial of 85 Mutineers by Court Martial and sentence of 80 Mutineers to 10 years imprisonment at Meerut,<sup>37</sup> Henry realised that it was in the Brahmanical portions of the quarters matured the plan of rising in May 1857.

In his assessment, the Mutineers of Meerut knew that they could be easily defeated by the European horses artillery, field battery dragoons and 60th Rifles and 'with such a prospect of speedy annihilation before them, they rose at 6 O' clock on Sunday afternoon, and set the first example of rebellion and murder.'<sup>36</sup> He regretted that the English permitted the Mutineers to leave the station without obstacle while they could easily destroy them, and it was in their power. Mead laid the blame for the whole on Hewitt and denounced him. Mead be moaned: "...the cowardice or folly of a single man had entailed the slaughter of a countless thousand.... There is no punishment great enough for such a weakness, and we had better let it rest under the shield of ignoring and universal execration."<sup>37</sup>

Henry Mead makes a detailed study of the Mutiny in different regiment, and came to the definite conclusion that 'The Sepoy character was inexplicable enough of all times.'<sup>38</sup> He trusted the native writers for details about the happenings in Delhi, particularly the news writer of the *Rajah of Jheend*. On the basis of Hindu letters, Mead concluded that the commercial and trading classes had nothing to do with the Mutiny.<sup>39</sup>

In the proclamation issued by the king of Delhi, Henry saw the entire argument in favour of Mutiny.<sup>40</sup> He took no notice of the

33. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

civil rebellions during the period of Mutiny. However, he had anticipated the Civil rebellion aspect as in his view the masses were largely disaffected and detested the British. He wrote : "Here and there a man may be heard of who, from interest, or through taking a more enlarged view of public affairs supports the English Government; but the vast majority of all classes detests with a fervour which blood hardly suffices to allay."<sup>41</sup> In the actions of Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, Henry saw the attempts of creating a confederacy by employing the pretension of a *padshah*, the wrongs of the ruler of Oudh, and the superstitions of the Hindus.<sup>42</sup> He was bitterly critical, almost abusive of Zafar by accusing him of trying to pursue the vocation of his ancestors, who were 'emphatically the greatest thieves in the world.'<sup>43</sup> He was convinced that the complicity of the sepoys and king of Delhi in the rebellion was evident from the first movement of alarm,<sup>44</sup> as he did not shut the gates against the mutineers and did not ask them to behave properly.

In Zafar, he saw 'The descendant of Tamerlane inheriting the ancestral thirst for blood,<sup>45</sup> who did not prevent the killing of English women and children who had done him no harm. Henry wrote to incite his countrymen to take revenge 'full and complete,'<sup>46</sup> against the ruler.

Though Mead wrote in detail about the incidents and gave many facts and figures to establish his credibility, he also gave credence to rumours and false stories. He wrote that Nana had received an English education,<sup>47</sup> which was false. He presented Nana as a ruffian and a cruel man. He described the false story of woman asking for shade in the sun was killed instead and her infant; crawling over the dead bodies, was also later killed.<sup>48</sup> He accused Nana of inflicting severe punishments on his victims, including cutting off of nose and ears and hanging them from the neck.<sup>49</sup> Edward Leckay

41. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 135.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

exposed the inaccuracies in Mead's book from page to page and damaged severely its worth as an authentic account of the Sepoy revolt.

A fierce imperialist, Henry was worried about the prospect of the English rule in India. He wanted that the English rule should work for 'Changing of a rebellious people into contented people and deficient into surplus...' <sup>50</sup> Mead accused the East India Company for hindering, 'The happiness of India, and the prosperity of England.' <sup>51</sup> He advocated for assumption of the direct responsibility of the Government by the crown in place of the company. He suggested retention of the aristocracy. He pleaded that military officer should not be sent to civil services, <sup>52</sup> and the ablest men be appointed to office without reference to the class he belonged too. <sup>53</sup> Henry pleaded for drastic changes in the policies of the British Government relating to the administration in India. In his view the education system of the British was inadequate as it provided education only to upper class. He pleaded for education to all. He wanted education to be imported by the native teachers who could convey the wisdom of Europe in the language of the East. He denounced the Judicial System of the British as it did not deliver justice. He also denounced land revenue system and the treatment meted out to the people. He exposed the cruelties of the police. In his view it was binding upon the British to 'Promote the Prosperity of the toiling ryot.' <sup>54</sup>

Henry Mead made an emotional plea for winning over the native rulers. Narrating the case of the Rajah of Mysore, Mead attempted to show how shabbily did the British treat the Indian princes. <sup>55</sup> But at the same time he looked to the ultimate absorption of every native state, as only question of time. <sup>56</sup> He wanted the British to earn money from India and learn from the Yankees. However, he cautioned them from nursing any contempt for the dark skin, by several reforms he wanted to 'put future revolt utterly out of

50. *Ibid.*, p. 336.

51. *Ibid.*, Preface II.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 355-56.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 332.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 212.



question.<sup>57</sup> As a conservative liberal Henry wanted the British to know that India had a peculiar system of civilization of her own and any new law was to grow out of the old. The British civilization could not flourish as a transplanted root.

As a journalist he analysed the problem of the Indian press. He was shocked to find that the British looked upon the Indian press as a 'Mere Engine of mischief, as force inimical to the proper influence of Government and the true welfare of the people.'<sup>58</sup> As a crusader for the freedom of press, Mead attacked Gagging Act as something of an injury to the feelings, as well as an insult to the patriotism of the English in India.<sup>59</sup> His maxim was 'we have conquered India by British hands, and by them must be retained.'<sup>60</sup> He held that the British Government in India rested not on consent but force. He thought that the maintenances of more English regiments would have averted the possibilities of a Sepoy Revolt. After a careful study of the regiment, their numerical strength and the stations, his conclusion was that... 'in December 1854, before the annexation of Qude took place, if we had three more European regiments then we had, then the rebellion had not occurred.'<sup>61</sup> His remedy for the recurrence of the Mutiny was posting more and more European troops in India.

Basically Mead was a racist. He could not entertain the idea of equality of man. He was against giving Indians high posts, or their competing with English for higher posts. Mead wrote : 'The Asiatic can never occupy the same platform with the European; and it is a cruel mockery to teach him to the contrary... The law that affected to put the two races on a level would be at variance with the decrees of nature, which has ordained that there should be an eternal wall of separation between them.'<sup>62</sup> He was not in favour of the transplanting of British institution. The civilization in India as 'The Hindoo is always a 'man' but he will never be a 'brother', in the sense which implies an identity of feelings and interests with the

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-340.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

English man.<sup>63</sup> After narrating the victory of the British in suppressing the Mutiny he stressed in a racist tone: 'It shows that English men are beings made of a superior clay, gifted with the power and instinct of mastery over the dusky tribes of the East.'<sup>64</sup>

Henry Mead did not write an authentic, well researched history of the Mutiny. In fact, in a polemical tone, he wrote a summary of the events without checking the authenticity or truthfulness of the cited events. He wrote as a journalist with the aim of criticising and cautioning the Government for the lapses. Despite writing more on the course of events at Lucknow, Cannpore and Jhansi, etc. He felt tempted to write on all aspects of the current problems, issues and the likely results of the Mutiny. Mead wrote 15 chapters on different topics relating to India out of a total of 30. Hence he, made the initial study of the Mutiny in the broader context of other problems and policies, as administrative, military, social, religious and economic. Mutiny was not seen as an isolated phenomenon. It was a result of several policies, experiemnts, lapses and failure of the British Government in India. It was seen in a wider spectron than a mere revolt of the Sepoys.

His methodology betrayed this incompetence as an historian. He did not go through the process of examination, analysis, comparison and corelation and accordance with the canons of historiography of accepted events as historical facts. His equipage in respect of source material was also defective. His prejudices became visible in his writing and he lacked the desired objectivity. He was not been fulfilling rigorous demands of history. He was more a narrator of events than a critical historian. In consistent critical spirit he moralised and passed valueable judgements. Moral judgement of persons and their actions were essential to his conception of historiography. Mead judged individuals according to their actions as he did in case of Lord Canning.

The values which Henry used were those of Enlightenment Rationism Evengelication. He claimed great regard for the factual evidenc but failed. He did not use reference and foot notes. His treatment of the subject was inexhaustible and more factual than analytical. As a journalist, Mead wrote as one who had broken the

63. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

64. *Ibid.* p. 378.

hard scholarly crust of history and brought out the tender, sensitive, innerside to capture the imagination of common man. His own narrative style displayed great freedom, vigour and perspicacity throughout always correct of narration of the Mutiny was animated and picturesque. His work become mirror of the troubled and uncertain times in which it was written. The British reactions to rude shock of 1857 as elaborated in the work of Mead, reflected that Britain was alive with self criticism.

## Himachal Pradesh and The Revolt of 1857

RAJESH CHAUHAN\*

In 1857 A.D., a great upheaval took place in India. This has been called as "Sepoy Mutiny" by the English scholars. But the Indian scholars proclaim it "The First War of Independence." It originated from the political, social, economic, religious and military grievances that had been accumulating for quite sometime, and needed only a spark to take an explosive turn. This was provided by the mishandling of the 'greased-cartridge affair.' The revolt began first at Barrackpur, where the discontentment of the sepoys was marked by the out-break of incendiary fires. The open revolt and disaffection soon spread to the north-western India.

In 1857, Simla and Kangra were two districts<sup>1</sup> in Himachal region; the former was included in the Cis-Sutlej division and the latter in Trans-Sutlej division. The rest of the area was held by the petty chiefs—Rajas, Ranas, Thakurs etc. Bushahr, Kangra, Mandi, Sirmaur, Bilaspur, Keonthal, Chamba and Suket were some of the important erstwhile states.

Even since the advent of the British, the people in Himachal Pradesh had been harbouring a great deal of resentment against their rule for the interference in their political and economic affairs. The people were also opposing the interference of the Government-supported Christian missionaries in their religious affairs.

In the north-western India the first military station to feel the spread of the mutiny was Ambala. Besides being a large cantonment, this city was also one of the three Musketry Depots to which detachments from different regiments in the Punjab and the North-Western Provinces had been detailed for training in the use of the 'notorious'

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1. These districts were governed by Deputy Commissioner; William Hay was incharge of Simla and Reynell Taylor of Kangra,

Enfield rifle.<sup>2</sup>

On the eve of the outbreak of the uprising in 1857 Captain Briggs, the Superintendent of the Hill Roads, Simla actually saw the entire hill-population seething with the feeling of revolt. He received warning at several places from hill-people that "no Feringhee would remain alive to the north of Ambala."<sup>3</sup>

The British authorities took a serious view of the whole matter. They at once took necessary measures to meet any dangerous situation. Consequently when the outbreak of the uprising took place in May, 1857 they were found ready to face the challenge. At the very outset they issued a proclamation that civilians, *faqirs*, *gosains*, etc., were not to wander about the country, as they were liable to be apprehended and if respectable men might, from not being known, be treated roughly as suspected persons (connected with the rebels).<sup>4</sup> The roads, ferried and *nakas* or hill passes were heavily guarded. Travelling passes issued to the ordinary travellers. The temples, mosques, *takkias*, etc., the usual resting places of such wanderers, were watched in the large towns and all the new arrivals were brought before the Deputy Commissioner of the district concerned. At the same time the *daks* of the people were censored and examined in the post office and all the letters of doubtful or mischievous tendency received for the regiments or inhabitants of the districts were suppressed.<sup>5</sup>

Despite all these measures, the revolt did take place, though not to that extent as at other places in Hindustan, where the British hold was not so tight. The cantonments in the Himachal region viz., Simla, Kotgarh, Kasauli, Dagshai, Subathu, Jutogh, Kangra and Nurpur being situated on the Himalayan spurs, were inhabited by the British regiments; only a few Indian sepoys were kept there for duties. There was a full regiment the Nasiri Battalion at Jutogh and a troop each at Kasauli, Kangra and Nurpur.

#### Mutiny at Jutogh

The news of the Meerut and Delhi massacres reached Simla on the night of the 13th May, 1857. At that time the 1st and 2nd

2. *Punjab Government Records, Mutiny Records Reports*, Vol. VIII, Part-I, Lahore, 1911, p. 34.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

4. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, pp. 209-11, 213,

5. *Ibid.*

Fusiliers and the Gurkha regiment known as the Nasiri Battalion were stationed in the hill cantonments alongwith General Anson, the British Commander-in-Chief and his Staff. Immediately after hearing the news of the outbreak of mutiny at Meerut, General Anson, ordered the Nasiri Battalion to march from Jutogh to Ambala, preparatory to moving on to Delhi. But the Gurkhas had used language of a very insubordinate and mutinous character with their officers and they had declared their determination not to move a step from Jutogh.<sup>6</sup>

The fearful intelligence from the plains, the very questionable fidelity of the Nasiri Battalion and the unprotected State of the Simla station naturally produced the great alarm amongst the British residents. On the morning of 14th May, 1857 some of European residents applied to Colonel Chester, Adjutant-General of the Army, had obtained an order on the "Jutogh Magazine" for a supply of muskets and ammunition. A meeting of the British residents of Simla was also called for the purpose of taking measures for the protection of their life and property.<sup>7</sup>

The main object of the Britishers were to get the Nasiri Regiment out of the hills and this William Hay, the Deputy Commissioner of Simla, hoped to do, though requiring upwards of 700 coolies for the transport of its baggage, the following day.

On 14th May, 1857 a meeting was organised by the British resident of Simla at Mr. Peterson's house. It was attended by 120 Europeans. In this meeting a committee of Safety had been appointed and a sort of militia organized. Arms and ammunition as could be procured were distributed.<sup>8</sup> In short, every thing was done calculated to protect the station against all contingencies.

On 15 May, 1857, William Hay rode towards Jutogh cantonment and just as he got about three-quarters of a mile from Simla, a most unexpected sound of shouting and violent altercation fell on his ears. He observed natives flying in every directions; some, chiefly coolies, to the tops of the neighbouring hills; others, mostly *banyas*

6. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, pp. 57-58; also see Edward J. Buck, *Simla Past and Present*, Calcutta, 1904, pp. 58-60; also see Krishan Kumar, *Itihas Sakshi He*, Delhi, 1988, p. 96.

7. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, p. 58; see also Vipin Pubby, *Simla Then & Now*, New Delhi, 1988, p. 31.

8. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, p. 59.

and trades people, towards Simla. After seeing this situation he comes to the conclusion that the Nasiri Battalion had mutinied.<sup>9</sup>

This mutiny started on the 15th of May, 1857 when the baggage of the regiment was about to be loaded, one of the sepoy cried out, "They are taking away our magazine. What shall we do without our magazine?"<sup>10</sup> It seemed a reasonable query to his fellow-sepoys and they answered it by rising into an open mutiny. The coolies were ordered to leave their loads and were driven out of the place with blows. The sepoy demanded with the most angry demonstrations that General Anson, Commander-in-Chief should be given up to them and made to answer with his blood for the attempts which had been made to interfere with their religion and destroy their caste.<sup>11</sup> The European officers were abused and a section of the Sepoys even conceived of plundering the stations of Jutogh, Simla and Kasauli and putting European residents to death. But they were dissuaded from such an action by their senior and elderly fellow-soldiers.

William Hay had only about 80 Europeans on whom he could really rely, and they were only partially armed and badly off for ammunition. At this juncture William Hay knew that danger was to be apprehend not only from the mutineers of the Nasiri Regiment, but also from the inhabitants of the Simla. At this critical moment Hay, the Deputy Commissioner of Simla, sent Mian Rattan Singh, uncle of the Raja of Mandi, to the mutinous sepoy to assure them on his behalf that his Government did not have any evil design to harm them in any way, religiously, economically or socially and as far as lay in his power, to redress their grievances. His mission did not succeed.<sup>12</sup>

William Hay, now, sent a letter through Gurkha looking individual, into the cantonment to Major Bagot requesting him to come and speak to him. The messenger enter the cantonment, and after few seconds of his entrance the sound of voices, which had continued for several hours without interruption, suddenly ceased. Shortly after, pale and exhausted, Major Bigot, accompanied by two Gurkha

9. *Ibid.* See also Vipin Pubby, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

12. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, pp. 61-62; See Pamela Kanwar, *Imperial Simla—The Political Culture of the Raj*, Delhi, 1990, p. 36; See Also Mian Goverdhan Singh, *History of Himachal Pradesh*, Delhi, 1982, p. 179.

sepoys, deputed by the rest of the men, issued from the Jutogh cantonment and came to William Hay, Deputy Commissioner of Simla. These two Gurkha sepoys at once commenced a detail of their alleged grievances. They complained that by relieving their guard over the Treasury, by taking their arms and ammunition, by establishing patrols, the European residents at Simla had shown a want of confidence in them which was not deserved. They also said that the introduction of the greased cartridge, the distribution of *attah* adulterated with bone dust, the establishment of tolls, and the promulgation of certain orders related to their pay were indications of a change of policy which boded nothing but evil to them and religion.<sup>13</sup>

After hearing their grievances, William Hay, assured them that British government did not have any evil design to harm them and their religion. They were also promised that their muskets and ammunition would be given back and their guards would be restored; and give them the advance of pay they required. Such measures cooled off the agitated minds of the sepoys and they returned to their duty quietly.<sup>14</sup>

#### Mutiny at Kasauli :

There was a serious trouble for some time at Kasauli. There was a regiment of the guards at Kasauli. The headquarters were at Jutogh. On May 16, 1857 rumours reached Kasauli that the Gurkhas had revolted at Jutogh and they had occupied Simla too. Captain Blackall, Officer Commanding the Station, one time deemed it expedient that the treasury guards consisting of a detachment of the Nasiri Battalion be replaced by the European soldiers, but his anxiety for the unprotected State of Simla, which he believed was menaced by the Nasiri Battalion, predominated, and he prevented his men firing. On the other hand he advised the removal of the treasure to the European barracks.<sup>15</sup>

Accordingly Captain Blackall removed the first instalment of rupees 40,000 from the treasury and took it to the European barracks. The Gurkhas felt offended and when he again came to take the second instalment, they refused to give him the treasure.<sup>16</sup> This confused,

13. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

14. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, pp. 63-64; see also M.S. Ahluwalia and others (contributed), *Himachal Past, Present & Future*, Shimla, 1975, pp. 103-04.

15. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, p. 129.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 66.



may paralysed the authorities. Nothing, however, was done to overawe the Gurkhas.

In the night the Gurkhas plundered the treasure consisting of rupees 15,325. 1. 9 (fifteen thousand three hundred and twenty five, one anna and nine pice) and proceeded towards Jutogh by the high road to Simla.<sup>17</sup> At Haripur they burnt a few tents of the Commander-in-Chief and looted his baggage. At Syree they stopped and robbed a few English officers and ladies, who were going to the plains and intercepted and destroyed a post bag containing the outgoing letters. The sepoy of Nasari Battalion had everywhere told the inhabitants of the hills that the British rule was over, and that if they heard of any one assisting the British or performing any duty for them, they would have him shot.<sup>18</sup>

At about 10 miles from Jutogh (or about midway between Haripur and Syree) they met Captain Briggs, Superintendent Hills Roads. He enquired from them as to where they were going. They replied, "Go along and don't speak to mutinous sepoys...Didn't the Europeans fire upon us yesterday, and would have shot us all if they dared; but we can fight too, and see! we go about with loaded muskets...The Commander-in-Chief had undertaken before leaving England to destroy all caste. But we would have his blood and that of other authorities. All it (Government) cared about was to make money....It is (the Government) a *banchute bunyah bakkal Sirkar*."<sup>19</sup> With considerable difficulty Briggs managed to get away from the Nasiri Regiment. One sepoy among the regiment told him that if he went to Jutogh I should have a ball through him, and another was restrained from shooting Briggs by a comrade saying, "It was not worth while as it was only one life." Another sepoy called out that I should find few Europeans in Simla, and that next day they would kill all that remained and burn the place down.<sup>20</sup>

When the sepoys reached near Jutogh, they were apprehended by their own brethren who had turned loyal by then. A sum of rupees

17. *Military Consultations*, dated 19 June, 1857, No. 260; also see *Punjab Government Records, Ibid.*, pp. 66-67; *Secret Consultations*, dated 31 July, 1857, Nos. 14-18; 29 January 1858, Nos. 7-10; also see Despatch to secret Committee, No. 48 of 1857 and No. 6 of 1858, National Archive, Delhi.

18. *Punjab Govt. Records, op. cit.*, pp. 132-33.

19. A Government of Shopkeepers see *Punjab Govt. Records, op. cit.*, pp. 133-34.

20. *Ibid.*

7,000 were collected from 46 men and they were put in the regimental quarter guards. Subsequently, however, two sepoy Munhir Sahai and Seeladhar were tried by court-martial for having spoken against the school of Musketry men and were dismissed from the service. After a short while all captured sepoy of the Nasiri Regiment of Kasauli were sent to Ambala and were severely dealt with.<sup>21</sup>

**Panic at Simla :**

There was a great deal of chaos and disorder at Simla too. When the European population of the Simla heard that the Gurkhas were on their way to Simla, they became nervous. Dreading the same fate that had befallen their brethren at Meerut and Delhi, "they fled head-long from the Station, women screaming to their servants to carry their children faster out of danger, men offering bribes to the bearers to carry their baggage and leave the women to shift for themselves."<sup>22</sup>

Some of the English army officers also failed to show the courage expected of them and fled away to the neighbouring hill states. Among those who sought safety at Keonthal state were Major-General Penny, Lt. Colonels Keith Young, Greathed, Thos. Quin, Colyear, and seven other officers.<sup>23</sup> The other European inhabitants of Simla took refuge at Junga. The residence of the Rana of Keonthal, other stayed with the Thakurs of Koti and Balsan States, while the remainders sought safety in the hill cantonements of Dagshai, Subathu and Kasauli. In the hurry of the moment few English people provided themselves with suitable means of conveyance or with even a small stock of provisions. Consequently all were exposed to annoyances and privations. Many Europeans underwent great hardships, while a few met with severe injuries. But the English fugitive received much kindness from the hill chiefs.<sup>24</sup> Simla was deserted, its residents and visitors wandering in the neighbouring

21. *Foreign Secret Consultations*, dated July 3, 1857, Nos. 4-5. See also *Punjab Govt. Records*, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-38. For details of Kasauli revolt see, *Military Consultations*, dated 7 August 1857, Nos. 263-64 and dated 29 January, 1858, Nos. 291-93.

22. T.R. Holmes, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, London, 1904, p. 116. See also J. Cave-Browne, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857*, Vol. I, Edinburgh, 1861, pp. 196-202.

23. Keith, Young, *Delhi 1857*, ed. by Henry Norman and Mrs. Keith Young, London, 1902, p. 323.

24. *Punjab Govt. Records*, *op. cit.*, p. 65, see also Edward J. Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

hills for safety, betraying a feeling of insecurity and panic, altogether new to the hill people and most destructive to the British prestige. In the words of Captain Briggs, "Simlah had the appearance of a city of the dead."<sup>25</sup> The deserters returned after a few days when it was explained to them that Nasiri battalion had come back to their allegiance.

#### Loyalty of Hill Chiefs :

During the revolt of 1857, most of the hill chiefs remained loyal to the British. Bilaspur State sent 50 well-armed soldiers and they were posted near the Boileauganj Bazar. Sixty Sirmauri soldiers under the command of Kanwar Bir Singh, the raja of Sirmaur, were posted in Bara Bazar, and sixty men furnished by the ranas of Keonthal, Dharni and Bhajji were stationed in the immediate neighbourhood of Deputy Commissioner's house. Besides, Mian Jai Singh of Baghal, the ranas of Keonthal, Dharni, Koti and Jubbah with about 250 followers remained in Simla to render their services at a moment's notice. In a few weeks time order was restored, people returned to their houses, surprised to find their houses and property intact, for notwithstanding the dire confusion, it was astonishing that no robberies took place, scarcely even a petty theft, though in that chaos the opportunities for the laws of *meum et tuum* were so numerous, houses having been left open and unprotected. In 1858, William Hay, the Deputy Commissioner of Simla reported that 'Simla was the safest place in India during the mutinies of 1857.'<sup>26</sup>

#### Disturbance in Hindoor or Nalagarh :

The news of the mutiny at Jutogh and Kasauli also spread through Hindoor or Nalagarh State. Taking advantage of worsening law and order situation at Simla, there had been some disturbances in Nalagarh state, which, it was apprehended, might, extended to the Ropar tehsil. Fearing lest the arms etc., should fall into the hands of the Gurkhas and other disaffected persons, the *zamindars* of Malaun seized them and refused to allow the party in charge of the armoury to proceed. Deputy Commissioner Simla, Lord William

25. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

26. *Foreign Political Consultations*, dated 12 Nov., 1858, Nos. 266-70. See also Mian Goverdhan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 179; and Edward J. Buck, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60.

Hay, at once deputed Mian Jai Singh, brother of the rana of Baghal to the disturbed area. He was able to restore law and order in the area with his native wisdom.<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, Jullundar mutineers, about 600 in number were reached at Baddi in Nalagarh. They remained there for a very short time. On hearing of the approach of the British party, they struck their camps, followed the seeswan line of road through the Shivalik Range, and then made the best of their way to the Yumuna, across which they escaped.

**Measures for preventing the Jullundar mutineers from entering the Hills :**

On the 10th of June, 1857 news reached Simla that the Jullundar troops had mutinied, and on the 11th, that a portion of them were crossing the Sutlej at Mukowal and heading towards Pinjaur. Captain D. Briggs, Superintendent Hill Roads, at once started to Nalagarh with the intention of preventing the mutineers entering the hills. Within 24 hours the rana of Baghal furnished 150 match-lockmen, the raja of Bilaspur 250, and the State of Nalagarh, which had lapsed to the British government, a few months earlier 100 men. These were all very badly armed and deficient in ammunition. This did not however much matter, as before British troops reached Pinjaur on the 12th of June 1857 the mutineers had passed through Baddi, and left the Pinjaur Dhoon by the Seeswan Pass. In passing through Nalagarh they had taken 200 rupees from the tehsildar, and would probably have pillaged the place but for the adroitness of some of the relatives of the late raja. After holding Nalagarh for a few days, and placing a small garrison in the fort of Plassia, in case of any other detachments of mutineers attempting to cross the Sutlej, Captain D. Briggs returned to Simla.<sup>28</sup>

In this expedition the hill people were found very willing to co-operate, but with the indifferent arms they possessed they naturally dreaded encountering the well-armed sepoys in the plains.

**Execution of Ram Parshad Bairagi :**

About this time, when a slight disturbance took place at Nalagarh one Ram Parshad, a *bairagi* of Sabathu, was suddenly arrested on a charge of being the writer of certain seditious letters. These letters were three in number and though full of the most seditious

27. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, p. 70.

28. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, p. 139.

expressions. The supposed writer's name and address was also given at full length on the envelop of each of them. The letters were forwarded through the post at a time when it was notorious that native letters were subjected to the strictest examination. Two of the letters were addressed to a *subedar* of the Nasiri Regiment, then doing good service at Saharanpur, and the third was directed to the care of the Raja of Patiala's *Vakil* in attendance on the Commissioner. The contents of this letter were especially calculated to excite suspicion that it was not written by the person whose name appeared outside. It called upon the Rajas *guru*, mentioning him by name, to exert himself in the cause of the mutineers. Thus, such a man was so daring, so reckless, so utterly indifferent to consequences as to commit to paper such unqualified sedition with his name attached at full length, and transmit the same through the Government Post Office, when every letter was searched, such an individual would not be likely to exercise much control over his tongue or activities. Thus, Ram Parsad *Bairagi* was arrested and conveyed to Ambala, where he was executed.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Bushahr State during revolt of 1857 :**

During the great revolt of 1857 Raja Shamsher Singh of Bushahr acted in a way hostile to the British, yet it cannot be assessed with material at our disposal as to how far his sympathies were with the rebels or how much was he inclined to be independent. Undoubtedly, he kept back his tribute, offered no aid, treated officials travelling through his territory with discourtesy, and refused the ordinary supplies. Lord William Hay, the Deputy Commissioner of Simla and also the Agent for the Hill States, proposed to send a force to Rampur to coerce him, but there were no troops available. Consequently nothing was done until after the great revolt, when Lord William Hay recommended that the raja be deposed and the state taken under the direct management of the Superintendent, Simla Hill States. This was, however, not deemed advisable by Sir John Lawrence, the then Chief Commissioner of the Punjab and the raja's behaviour during the great revolt was overlooked.<sup>30</sup>

29. *Punjab Govt. Records, op. cit.*, pp. 70-72, 79; also see *Himachal Pradesh Ke Swatantrata Sanani* (Pratham Khand), Shimla, 1985, p. xvii.

30. *Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteers, Kinnaur*, Ambala, 1971, p. 62; also see *Simla Hill States Gazetteer, Bushahr State*, 1910, Vol. VIII, Part-A, Lahore, 1911, p. 10.

### Events in the Trans-Sutlej Division

It was of the most important that the peace of this division should be preserved, as it formed the medium through which the supplies and troops from the whole of the Punjab proper had to pass in order to reach Delhi. It was likewise, important, as containing the strong forts of Phillour, Bijwara, Kangra and Nurpur, the Sanitaria of Dharmsala and Dalhousie. This division was also the supply depot of a large portion of the carriage used in the transport of the troops and stores to Delhi.

#### Kangra and Nurpur :

The peculiarities of Kangra district are its mountainous nature, the number of rivers and streams that traverse it, and the number of petty chieftains and hill forts which are dispersed over its area. The first two causes combining to make communication difficult and uncertain, and the last rendering it imperative, especially in times of anxiety.

Second only in importance to Phillour was the fort of Kangra. "He who holds the fort holds the hills", is a common saying of the people of Kangra. A wing of the 4th Native Infantry under the command of Major Pattenson held the fort of Kangra. The other wing of this regiment held the sister fort of Nurpur. On the 15th May, 1857 Captain Younghusband, Commanding Police, came to Dharmsala and showed Major Raynell Taylor, Deputy Commissioner, Kangra, letters detailing the first events of the outbreak at Meerut and Delhi. Major Taylor immediately made arrangements for bringing into the citadel of the fort of Kangra all the available men of Captain Younghusband's Police Battalion and if necessary, to the garrison of the Kangra fort. This step was taken early on the morning of May 16th, 1857 when Captain Younghusband marched with three hundred *Sher Dil* (Punjabis) police into the citadel. This was further defended by a howitzer taken from the fort below. The bulk of the treasure was at the same time sent into the citadel, and the remainder lodged in the newly fortified police station. This strong fort was thus secured and the wing of the 4th Native Infantry were effectually controlled, as their lines were commanded by the citadel.<sup>31</sup> Every house in

31. *Punjab Govt. Records, op. cit.*, pp. 147, 206-07; see also *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series Punjab*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1908, p. 359; see also *Punjab District Gazetteers, Kangra District 1924-25*, Vol. VII, Part A, Lahore, 1926, pp. 114-15.

Dharmasala was guarded by a police battalion or new levies, a part of which was also detached as the jail guard. The post-office was brought under a strict surveillance, the ferries and *nakahs* or hill passes guarded, and all vagrants seized and brought before the magistrates for examination.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, Major Taylor, the Deputy Commissioner, Kangra, was compelled to entertain a very large number of men to watch the ferries and the *nakahs*, and his anxiety was further increased by the manifestation in two instances of an uneasy feeling among the Hill chiefs. The first was by Raja Partap Chand of Tira, who seemed inclined to raise troops on his own account. Major Lake, Commissioner and Superintendent, Trans-Sutlej states, with great promptitude removed the Katoch *thanadar* of Tira, who was one of his (Partap Chand) adherents, and substituted a Muhammadan, who has since afforded constant and true information regarding the Rajas movements, and no outbreak took place.<sup>33</sup> The second was, however one petty rising originated by Partap Singh of Kullu, under the impression that British power was annihilated. As we shall see in the next pages wherein the full account of the revolt of Partap Singh has given.

On July 11, 1857 when information of the mutinies of the native troops at Jhelum and Sialkot reached Kangra, Major Taylor, Deputy Commissioner, Kangra, and Captain Younghusband, Commanding officer, disarmed the left wing of the 4th Native Infantry with the aid of the men of the *Sher Dil* police battalion. At this time captain Younghusband had only at his disposal some 3 hundred men of the Police Battalion, a large number of whom were employed as guards and *sentries*, and while the bells of arms were at some distance from his men, they were quite close to the lines of the *Poorbees* (hillmen) sepoys. Under these circumstances disarming was a critical operation, but owing to the skillful arrangements of Captain Young-husband, the active co-operation of Major Taylor and the good feeling of the sepoys of the 4th Native Infantry, no disturbance took place. The arms were taken and placed in the citadel.<sup>34</sup>

32. *Punjab Government Records*, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-11.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-09.

34. *Punjab Govt. Records*, *op. cit.*, pp. 157, 214-15, also see J. Cave Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. 11, p. 32.

**Position of Nurpur :**

A wing of the 4th Native Infantry held the fort of Nurpur with a small guard of 1 Havildar and 8 men of the police battalion in the tehsil. There was nothing to protect the British officers, treasure and town if the regular regiment became mutinous. Some years ago the 4th Native Infantry had been in open revolt regarding Scinde allowances. This circumstance did not augur well for the future conduct of the regiment.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the position of Nurpur was often a matter of anxiety to British.

On account of the above described exposed state of the *tehsil*, town, etc., of Nurpur, the British proposed to raise 50 men under Chowdhary Tek Chand of Nurpur to assist in collecting the revenue, to strengthen the hands of the Civil officers and enable them to lend some efficient assistance and in times of unfortunate circumstances to protect the lives of the European officers.<sup>36</sup> This step was taken to suppress the mutinous feeling of the regiment as well as of the people of Nurpur.

Immediately after the disarming of Native troops at Kangra on July 11, 1857 Major Taylor on the same night marched with 100 men of the Police Battalion to Nurpur, a distance of 34 miles of hill road. Before Major Taylor reached the place, Major Wilkie, the commanding officer of the right wing of the 4th Native Infantry at Nurpur had disarmed the wing very easily. His sepoys even carried their arms to his bungalow themselves on the other side of the town through the Bazar.<sup>37</sup> Major Taylor did, however, excellent service at this juncture by organizing lines of posts for intercepting the Sialkot fugitives. Some 30 sepoys and 60 camp followers were apprehended in the Kangra district, and some 30 individuals were seized in Chamba, half of whom were sepoys.<sup>38</sup>

In Kangra 4th Native Infantry in the fort of Kangra and Nurpur were disbanded. These were entirely precautionary measures. In the Kangra hills the mass of population had exhibited a friendly feelings towards the British and a spirit of loyalty towards the British government. In the Nurpur direction the hill people signalled

35. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, pp. 143, 211.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

37. *Punjab Government Records, op. cit.*, p. 215, also see J. Cave-Brown, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 32.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 158.



themselves by capturing the fugitive mutineers of the Sialkot Brigade. It appears strange on the face of the fact that Nurpur was the principal scene of Ram Singh's rebellion in 1848-49. The raja of Chamba afforded protection to the English ladies and children in the sanatorium of Dalhousie. He also captured thirty of the Sialkot mutineers and made them over to the local authorities of Kangra. Raja Ram Singh of Siba and Raja Jodhbir Chand of Nadaun went in person to meet Major Edward Lake, Commissioner and Superintendent, Trans-Sutlej States and to tender offers of assistance as soon as the mutiny started.<sup>39</sup>

At the request of Major Edward Lake, the Commissioner, Trans-Sutlej States, Wazir Gashaon of Mandi supplied 125 matchlockmen to the local authorities of Hoshiarpur and sent some 50 men with him to Jalandhar. The wazir, in compliance with the expressed wishes of the Chief Commissioner, had made arrangements for furnishing a large number of men, if any need had arisen for their services. In the event of any local insurrection in Jalandhar or Hoshiarpur, the fidelity of the Mandi men might have been depended upon as having no sympathy with the population of the plain portion of the Jalandhar Doab. The wazir of Mandi also contributed a lakh and a quarter of rupees towards the Punjab's 6 per cent loan, besides which some ten thousand rupees have been contributed by the several Hill Chiefs and other parties.<sup>40</sup>

#### Rebellion of Mian Partap Singh :

Mian Partap Singh of Kullu was very happy to learn of the outbreak of revolt of 1857. He harboured a great deal of hatred for the British rule. Early in June 1857 Partap Singh with the help of his brother-in-law Bir Singh attempted to induce the people of Sheoraj in Kullu to rise in rebellion against the British Government. Partap Singh also sent written message to the headmen of the province, in which he told them and their followers to come quickly and to come armed. He reminded them of the hereditary claims of his family to their loyalty. Partap Singh also told the people of Kullu that such an opportunity was not likely to occur again and he appealed to their religious feelings to rise in his favour. Besides that, he got the news circulated far and wide that the large stations in India had

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 161.

40. *Punjab Govt. Records, op. cit.*, pp. 160-61.

41. The other spellings given in various sources reads like Pertab or Partab.

been massacred.<sup>42</sup>

Partap Singh claimed to be lineal hereditary decent the rightful chief of Kullu in supersession of Rai Gyan Singh, who was illegitimate son of Thakur Singh previous raja of Kullu. British Government, while continuing the *jagir*, changed Gyan Singh's title to 'Rai' and withdraw all political powers, also reserving the right to fell and sell timber in the *jagir*. Moreover, Gyan Singh's father Thakur Singh had been recognised as Raja by the Sikhs. Thus, Partap Singh claimed that the illegitimacy of Thakur Singh was in itself sufficient to bar Gyan Singh's claims to succeed to a principality of Rajput among whom bastard are never allowed to succeed to property.<sup>43</sup>

Early life of Partap Singh was not a happy one. In his youth he took to the profession of arms and held a high rank in the military service of the Sikhs and fought against the British in the first Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46. He was supposed to have been killed in the battle of Aliwal. On such a belief a handsome provision was made for his widow by the British Government. Nothing was heard of Partap Singh from 1846 to 1855. When suddenly in 1855, after a lapse of 10 years, Partap Singh appeared in the garb of a *fakir* and set faith that he was the missing Partap Singh that he had been severely wounded at Aliwal but had been treated for his wounds in one of our dispensaries on leaving which he wandered about as a *fakir*. On reaching Kullu he put forward his claims for the *gaddi* of Kullu once again. But the British Government did not consider his demand.<sup>44</sup>

Partap Singh took up his abode in Siraj, an area in the proximity of Kullu. He gathered around him a small retinue and lived with princely splendour. His influential personality soon made him popular and won unofficial recognition of his right to rule over the Kullu State. Several villagers along with the *Negis* of Siraj refused to pay revenue to Rai Gyan Singh and paid to Mian Partap Singh. On two previous occasions Partap Singh led popular demonstrations in his favour. The British government took exception to such attempts on his part and warned against making any public appeal of this nature. Further, he was asked to part with the armed retinue

42. *Foreign Secret Consultations*, dated 25th Sept. 1857, Nos. 33-36; See also despatch to secret committee, No. 59 of 1857, NAI.

43. *Foreign Secret Consultations*, dated 25 Sept. 1857, Nos. 33-36.

44. *Foreign Secret Consultations*, *op. cit.*, Nos. 33-36.

and extravagant mode of life, as they did not suit his position. He was further warned that he would be only tolerated on condition if he lived peacefully. A strict watch was posted on his proceedings.<sup>45</sup>

The British government intercepted a lot of seditious correspondence, oral and written evidence was also collected from various source, and after it become perfectly clear to the British authorities that Partap Singh kindled the flames of sedition throughout the Kullu region. Not only that, he had also drawn within his influence several of the neighbouring chief, and the whole district was in danger, a danger which was only averted by the timely discovery of the whole plot. This plot was promptly detected and suppressed with great caution and tact. Partap Singh was arrested along with his brother-in-law Bir Singh and were immediately sent off to Kangra where they were tried by a commission composed of Reynell Taylor, the Deputy Commissioner, Kangra and his two assistants. Partap Singh and his principal adviser, Bir Singh, were found guilty and received the extreme penalty of Act XIV of 1857—death by being hanged.<sup>46</sup> The other 7 chief followers were punished with various terms of imprisonment.<sup>47</sup> The rest of the followers whose guilt could not be proved were acquitted after witnessing the execution.

A large repository of arms, matchlocks, swords, *zumboorahs*, etc., together with a large store of power and lead, was found in Kullu. The powder has been destroyed and the arms broken up. The *jagir* and pension of Rani Runputtu, wife of Partap Singh, were confiscated. A small pension, just sufficient to keep her and her infant son safe from starving, was given to her. Besides that, she was removed from Kullu and the house in which Partap Singh lived was raised to the ground so that its ruins might remain as a monument of his unsuccessful attempt of rebellion.<sup>48</sup> Such measures cooled off the agitated minds of the people of Kullu and thus, the British were able to restore law and order in the Kullu region.

The only other incident connected with the mutiny is the arrest of a party of fugitive sepoys in Spiti. Those few of the Sialkot

45. *Ibid.*, see also *Punjab Government Records*, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

46. *Foreign Secret Consultations*, *op. cit.*, Nos. 33-36. See also *Punjab Govt. Records*, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-13.

47. Surdool-14 years; Kashi & Thulla-12 years; Man Dass-10 years; Surat Ram-8 years; Kashub Ram-4 years; Devi Dutt-3 years.

48. *Foreign Secret Consultations*, dated 25 Sept. 1857, Nos. 33-36. See also *Punjab Government Records*, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

mutineers who got away from the field of Trimu ghat, fled into the Jammu hills. A small body of them, in the attempt to avoid British territory and return by a circuitous route to India, made their way through the mountains to Ladakh, and thence to Spiti, which they reached in a miserable plight. The Spiti men detained them, and sent notice to Mr. G. Knox, the Assistant Commissioner of Kullu, who came at once with a few police and arrested them.<sup>49</sup>

The uprising petered out in the hills with the fall of Mian Partap Singh. Although the people of Himachal had a mind to rise against the British and throw off their oppressive yoke once for all, but they could not do so. There were many reasons for it. Firstly, the British government had taken careful defensive and preventive measures. Secondly, the people did not get leaders who could organise and take them fight against the British. Here the majority of the population was of Rajputs. They looked up to Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu as the recognized leader of all the Rajputs north of the river Ravi and the Katoch rajas of Kangra as their local leaders. Both of these chiefs took their stand with the British. Thirdly, the whole of the region of Himachal Pradesh was divided into upwards of two scores of petty states and the mutual jealousies of their rulers rendered any combination very improbable. On the contrary, they extended all sorts of help to the British in crushing down the uprising. In recognition of their loyal services during the revolt the hill chiefs were latter on handsomely rewarded by the British government. Raja Hira Chand of Bilaspur was honoured with a salute of 11 guns and a valuable *khillat* and other gifts. Rana Sansar Sen of Keonthal and Rana Kishan Singh of Baghar were rewarded with the hereditary title of "Raja" and a valuable *khillat*. Thakur Jograj of Balsan was created a 'Rana', and also presented a valuable *khillat* in public durbar. Rana Goverdhan Singh of Dhami was rewarded by a remission of half the tribute for his lifetime. Similarly, the other petty chiefs were also rewarded by the British.<sup>50</sup> Thus, despite sufferings and sacrifices on the part of the people of Himachal Pradesh, no positive results could be obtained.

49. J. B. Lyall, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Kangra District, Punjab*, Lahore, 1874, p. 118.

50. C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sands Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 14-26; 139-155; See also *Foreign Consultations*, dated 6 August, 1858, Nos. 533-48, 1 Oct. 1858, Nos. 218-31, 242-243; 18 Nov. 1859, Nos. 1-2, 32-37.

## Judicial Administration in Punjab from 1849-1897

DR PAWAN KUMAR SINGLA\*

Before the annexation of Punjab to the British Indian empire in 1849, there was no organised judicial administration in the Lahore Kingdom. The system of government under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors was 'rude and simple'. The Maharaja himself and the local officials such as *nazims* and *kardars* decided both civil and criminal cases.<sup>1</sup> There was no regular hierarchy of courts with definite powers and jurisdiction. There was no written law;<sup>2</sup> customs and traditions played an important role in the dispensing of justice. Arbitration was freely resorted to in villages and in towns. The very idea of judiciary as a separate department of government was foreign to the rulers of that age; in the Lahore Darbar, too, there did not exist any separate ministry of law and justice.

But the advent of the British rule in Punjab marked a great change in the judicial administration. After the annexation of Punjab, Lord Dalhousie established a Board of Administration, with Henry Lawrence as President and two other members, John Lawrence and Mansel.<sup>3</sup> The Board enjoyed wide powers and unrestricted control over all matters pertaining to political, revenue and judicial administration. The province was divided into five divisions which

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1. There was, however, an appellate tribunal at Lahore, Adalat-i-Ala about which much is not known.
2. According to a contemporary European writer, "There is no law, written and oral, and courts of justice have not been anywhere established", see Henry T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta 1834, p. 182. Malcolm, however, observes that the prevailing administration of justice, though crude and unscientific was congenial to the temper of the people. See his book, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, p. 123.
3. *Punjab Administrative Report, 1849-50*, pp. 29-30.

were placed under separate Commissioners. The Commissioners were to be superintendents of revenue and police and were to exercise civil, appellate and original criminal powers of a Session Judge. The five divisions were sub-divided into twenty-seven districts, each under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioners were vested with civil, criminal and fiscal powers.<sup>4</sup> They were provided with a staff of a convened Assistant Commissioners and un-convenanted Extra-Assistant Commissioners. Each district was further divided into *tehsils*, which were placed under the charge of Tahsildars; they dealt with petty civil and criminal cases.

After the abolition of the Board in 1853, a separate Judicial Commissioner was appointed. The judicial system as initiated by the Board was maintained.<sup>5</sup> Further, no elaborate rules were prescribed for the guidance of the Judicial Commissioner<sup>6</sup>. He was, of course, the highest authority in the judicial administration of the province. His court was the final appellate court. He was also the head of the police.<sup>7</sup> Justice was further improved by bringing it near to the peasants door by means of the small cause courts, started in various towns of the province. The procedure laid down was as quick and simple as in the Central Courts. The average duration of a suit in 1855 was twenty-three days.<sup>8</sup>

With the increase of litigation, the office of the Judicial Commissioner was abolished by the Chief Court Act XXIII of 1865. In 1866, a Chief Court for the Punjab was established on the same model as in the three presidencies, but on the authority derived from the Indian Legislature Act XXIII of 1866.<sup>9</sup> It was to consist of two judges who were to be appointed by the Governor-General in Council. It was to be the highest court of criminal appeal or revision and was entrusted with extraordinary original civil jurisdiction in special cases. It was also authorised to try Europeans and British subjects committed to it for trial. It was to exercise its powers of

4. Foreign Misc. Series, S. No. 156, Nos. in the List 356-59, para 91.

5. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Punjab, Vol. I. Calcutta., 1908, p. 97 (hereafter abbreviated as IGI, Punjab).

6. N. M. Khilnani, *The Punjab Under the Lawrences*, Simla, 1951, p. 126.

7. *PAR*, 1854-56, p. 6.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7; also see, R. L. Handa, *The History of the Development of the Judiciary in the Punjab (1846-1884)*, Lahore, 1927, p. 6.

9. B. B. Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)*, Oxford, 1970, p. 538; IGI, Punjab, p. 97.

superintendence and control over all the civil courts in Punjab. With the establishment of this court, the first attempt at the periodical publication of its decisions was also made by proprietors of Punjab Printing Company. Upto this period no reports of decided cases were published. The object of the periodical publication of the decisions of the Chief Court was to bring about uniformity in the interpretation of the law.<sup>10</sup>

It was in 1862 that the Indian Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code were introduced in Punjab.<sup>11</sup> The Criminal Procedure Code was amended in 1872 when virtually a new Criminal Procedure Code was issued, repealing the earlier Acts on the subjects. There were to be four grades of criminal courts—the court of sessions and the courts of first, second and third class Magistrates. The distinction between these classes of magistrates lay in the amount of punishment. A Magistrate of the first class could sentence upto the extent of two years' imprisonment and could fine upto the limit of rupees 1,000; a second class Magistrate could imprison upto six months and could fine upto rupees 200; and a third class Magistrate could punish with one month imprisonment and a fine upto rupees 50. But while Magistrate of the first two classes could order whipping or solitary confinement for a certain period, a third class Magistrate could not pass such an order.<sup>12</sup> Magistrates of all the three classes were appointed by the Local Government and acted in subordination to the Magistrate of the District. The Local Government was also authorised to appoint special Magistrates or a bench of Magistrates with powers of the first, second or third class Magistrates.

In 1866, Civil Procedure Code was extended to Punjab. Under the code of arbitrators could only be appointed with the consent of the parties concerned,<sup>13</sup> and their award was to be final. It was expected, therefore, that the proportion of the cases referred to arbitrators would considerably decrease, and inversely the proportion of cases decided on merit would increase.<sup>14</sup>

10. *PAR*, 1866-67, para 17.

11. It was the result of the Indian Councils Act passed in 1861 by which the machinery of administration was recognised after the revolt of 1857-58.

12. C. L. Anand, *An Introduction to the History of Government of India*, Part II, p. II, p. 144; Daya Krishan Kapoor, *A History of the Development of Judiciary in the Punjab* (1884-1926) Lahore, 1928, p. 28.

13. *PAR*, 1865-66, p. 26.

14. *PAR*, 1867-68, p. 96.

In 1884, the Punjab Courts Act (Act of XVII of 1884) was passed to give effect to the scheme for the reorganisation of the courts in Punjab. In pursuance of this scheme, the province was divided into seven Civil Divisions; two Divisional Judges being appointed for each division except in the case of Derajat where the Commissioner, though no longer a Sessions Judge, was required to do a certain amount of civil judicial work.<sup>15</sup> In all other instances, the Commissioners were entirely relieved of civil and criminal judicial work. They, however, continued to exercise revenue appellate powers. The seven Civil Divisions were created mainly with a view to ensuring prompt disposal of civil appellate work. The two judges of each division sat as a Bench for hearing appeals. For criminal cases, the province was divided into ten Sessions Divisions. In three of those divisions Joint Sessions Judges were appointed in addition to the Session Judges. In fourteen out of thirty-one districts, special officers were appointed as District Judge. In the rest of the seventeen districts, the Deputy Commissioners became District Judges.<sup>16</sup>

It was on 1 November 1884 that the Bench system was introduced with a view to reducing the pressure of work on the Chief Court. This system worked upto 15 November 1885, when it was abolished.<sup>17</sup> The Governor-General in Council regretted that the Bench system was abandoned without having been allowed a sufficient period of trial and without any reference to the Supreme Government. However, on the recommendation of the judge of the Chief Court, the province was now divided into fourteen in place of previous seven Civil Divisions and thirteen Sessions Divisions. This was done to enable the Divisional Courts to cope with the increased work.<sup>18</sup>

The Punjab Courts Act, 1884, was amended in 1888. The object of the amendment was to enable the Chief Court to deal more expeditiously with the accumulated arrears, restricted the right of appeal in certain civil cases.<sup>19</sup> In 1895, the Punjab Courts Act of

15. Home (Judicial) Department Progs; A February 1886, No. 13.

16. PAR 1901-02, p. 34; Gilbert S. Henderson, the Code of criminal procedure, Act V of 1898, 4th ed. Calcutta 1898, p. 15; Kamla Sethi, *Administration of Punjab : A Study in British Policy, 1875-1905*, p. 11.

17. PAR, 1884-85, para 128; Home (Judicial) Department Progs., A, Feb. 1886 No. 13.

18. Home (Judicial) Department A, Progs., Feb. 1886, No. 32.

19. Act No. XIII of 1888, Home (Judicial), Department B. Progs; October 1888, Nos. 127-129 : J-o.

Kimely, *The Code of Civil Procedure*, Calcutta, 1889, p. 456.



1884 was again amended to provide that instead of the senior judge of the Chief Court ex-officio succeeding to the office of Chief Judge, the Governor General-in-Council would have the power to appoint a Chief Judge.<sup>20</sup> This was done to ensure the appointment of really competent person as Chief Judge of the Chief Court. This Act was again amended in 1896 and the strength of Chief Court was raised to six—4 permanent and 2 temporary Judges.<sup>21</sup>

Since 1897, a Legal Remembrance was appointed in Punjab. The bulk of the chamber work was to be entrusted to this officer of the government who was to be known as the Legal Remembrance. The Legal Remembrance was to be paid a salary of rupees 2000 a month if he was an Indian civilian or a full time Barrister, if he was a member of the Provincial Civil Service, he was to be paid rupees 1300 a month.<sup>22</sup>

Thus by 1897 a well organised judicial administration was developed in Punjab, having a fairly modern hierarchy of courts, and uniform system of law and procedure. After 1897, changes and reforms were brought about in the judicial administration of the province from time to time but the basic structure remained the same.

20. *Home (Judicial) Department, A. Progs.*; October 1895, Nos. 114-115.

21. *PAR*, 1901-02, para 75.

22. *Home (Judicial), Department, A Progs.*, March 1897, Nos. 1-8.

## Quit India Movement in the Punjab

NAVDIP KAUR\*

The failure of Cripps Mission in April 1942 aroused bitter controversy and left great sense of frustration. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, the Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum, consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. The future appeared dark to the Congress. They felt that if the British did not want to transfer power in hour of peril, there was no likelihood of their doing so after the war. The threat of Japanese invasion brought Gandhi home the fact that some more effective action was needed immediately to save India from becoming a theatre of war. This idea was first expressed in the *Harijan* of April 26, 1942.<sup>1</sup> The racial discrimination shown in the process of evacuation from Burma also created an atmosphere of disappointment. The entire country was moved at the talks of sufferings which the press carried at that time and the comparisons were frequently made with racial humiliation suffered at Amritsar in 1919.<sup>2</sup> Apart from British obduracy, popular discontents, a product of rising prices, war time shortages and highhanded government actions made the struggle inevitable. In these circumstances Gandhi asked the British, "Leave India in God's hands or in modern parlance to anarchy."<sup>3</sup>

But the British Government did not pay any heed to Congress demands. Their attitude had been rather harder because of the impression that the Individual Satyagraha had failed. Linlithgow reported to Amery in May 1942, "We had reduced them (Congress) to pulp and destroyed the national spirit, Mahatma did not know what to do...."<sup>4</sup> The bureaucracy was trying to wipe out the Congress.

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1. Amba Prasad, *The Indian Revolt of 1942*, Delhi, 1958, p. 38.

2. N. N. Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1942, p. 144.

3. Amba Prasad, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

4. Nicholas Mansergh (ed.), *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*, London, 1971, Vol. II, p. 123.

In a mood of desperation, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha from 7 to 14 July, 1942 and passed the Quit India Resolution demanding the immediate withdrawal of the British from India.<sup>5</sup> This resolution was endorsed by the A.I.C.C. on August 8, 1942 at Bombay.<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the details of Quit India Movement, we find the British official opinion in *Wickenden's Report on the Disturbances of 1942-43*.<sup>7</sup> Before passing the Quit India Resolution, the report stated that there were discussions among the Congress leaders whether the movement was to start in selected areas and was to proceed by stages. There was a proposal with Mahatma Gandhi to start the mass civil disobedience movement from the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab gradually going to the South but Sardar Patel and Gandhi finally decided to start it from the South where the preparations were perfect. In Punjab they opined that the Congress was weak and had little or no influence on the masses.<sup>8</sup>

In the early hours of 9th August, in a single sweep Mahatma Gandhi and all other top leaders of the Congress were arrested. It is reported that after the arrest of Gandhi and other prominent Congress leaders, some members of A.I.C.C. met at Bombay and drafted the 12-point programme on the lines laid down by Gandhi for starting mass civil-disobedience. These instructions were cyclostyled and handed over to members of various provinces, who were present there.<sup>9</sup> These instructions were received in the Punjab through some members of the A.I.C.C. who had gone to Bombay. It was understood that the instructions were cyclostyled in Lahore with a view to distribute them all over the province.<sup>10</sup>

The reaction of the arrests was most intense in Bombay, Bihar and Eastern U.P., where the movement attained the proportions of a rebellion. The students of Banaras Hindu University took lead in

5. Mitra *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 208.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

7. It is a comprehensive document prepared by the British intelligence on the Quit India Movement. It is based on intelligence reports, interrogation of the leaders of the movement, intercepted letters of prominent persons, speeches of Congress leaders and other circumstantial evidence.

8. P. N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement ; British Secret Report*, Faridabad, 1976, pp. 106-07.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

raising the banner of the revolt. The Congress flag flying on the main gate of the university was pulled down by the British tommies.<sup>11</sup> Tremors of the movement were felt in Madras, Delhi, some parts of Bengal, Assam and Orissa where its strength was of moderate degree.<sup>12</sup>

The political climate in the Punjab was, however, not wholly conducive to the success of any fresh political movement. Even a Punjab Congress worker who attended the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay had doubts regarding the outcome of the campaign in the Punjab as he knew the Congress was helplessly weak in the province. According to him the Akalis had been won over by the Sikandar-Baldev Pact and as such the 20 per cent Sikhs were practically excluded from the campaign. The Hindus dominated by the *Beopari* class had their own understanding with the government.<sup>13</sup>

But inspite of all this, the sudden arrests of Congress leaders caused surprise and anguish among the people of Punjab particularly among the urban Hindus. But they were leaderless and confused as most of the Congress leaders of the province had not yet returned from Bombay after attending the A.I.C.C. meeting which took the 'Quit India' decision. Moreover the prominent Congress leaders in the province like Lala Duni Chand, Munshi Hira Lal, Chaudhari Kartar Singh, Comrade Mangal Das, Sardar Sardul Singh, Abdul Majid and Giani Hira Singh Dard were also arrested on 9th August 1942 under the Defence of India rules.<sup>14</sup> However, there were spontaneous *hartals* and demonstrations in several cities of the province as a protest against the arrest of Congress leaders. But the demonstrators were subjected to indiscriminate lathi-charges. The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee was declared unlawful.

The impact of the arrest of the Congress leaders was intense in Lahore and Amritsar. In Lahore in the absence of Mr. Iftikhar-ud-din, President Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, who had gone to attend the A.I.C.C. meeting, Lala Achint Ram decided to hold a meeting at Lajpat Rai Bhawan to consider the situation arising out

11. S.R. Bakshi, *Congress and Quit India Movement*, Delhi, 1986, p. 208.

12. Francis Hutchins, *Spontaneous Revolution—The Quit India Movement*, Delhi, 1971, p. 7.

13. An Extract from the statement of Jagat Narayan, in P.N. Chopra (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 375.

14. *The Tribune*, August 10, 1942.

of the arrest of leaders. But before the meeting could be held, the police moved around the place and arrested sixty Congress workers.<sup>15</sup> The other prominent leaders arrested in Lahore were Lala Achint Ram, Mrs. Comrade Ram Kishan, Shrimati Lajiya Vati.<sup>16</sup> The Bradlaugh Hall and Lajpat Rai Bhawan which housed the offices of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee were occupied by the police.<sup>17</sup> On 9th, 12th and 14th August meetings were held at Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar and processions were taken out inspite of all the arrangements by the police to disperse the meeting and arrest the leaders.<sup>18</sup>

There were demonstrations and meetings in Lyallpur, Multan, Sargodha, Ludhiana, Rawalpindi, Rohtak, Ambala, Gurgaon and other districts of Punjab against the repressive policy of the government. At all these places Congress leaders were arrested.<sup>19</sup>

The significant feature of the Quit India Movement is that it received impetus mostly from the students. But fortunately for the Punjab Government the students at Lahore and Amritsar were on vacation and so initially the movement was deprived of the robust enthusiasm of the youth. However, there was some stir among the students in the major cities of the province on the opening of the colleges. In Lahore students of the Sanatan Dharam, D.A.V., Dyal Singh and Sikh National Colleges remained on strike for a number of days as a protest against the repressive policy of the government. Similarly in Amritsar the Hindu Sabha and Khalsa colleges were closed for a few days.<sup>20</sup> Students unrest was also reported from the districts of Hoshiarpur, Lyallpur, Sialkot, Ferozepur and Gujranwala.<sup>21</sup> The Punjab Education Code was amended to provide for the imposition of a penalty of exclusion or rustication of a college student for one year; and other measures taken to ensure that the students who take a prominent part in demonstration and the like should be debarred from taking examination and should be

15. A. Moin Zaidi, *The Way Out to Freedom*, New Delhi, 1973, p. 68.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-93. Also see Y.B. Mathur, *Quit India Movement*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 72-76.

20. S. L. Malhotra, *Civil Disobedience to Quit India*, Chandigarh, 1979, p. 146.

21. *Ibid.*

black-listed for government appointments.<sup>22</sup>

One important feature of the movement was sporadic acts of 'sabotage' such as telephone wire-cutting, damaging of post-boxes and derailing trains. Such incidents were reported at Lahore, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur and Rohtak districts.<sup>23</sup> In Karachi 6 persons were sentenced to six months' imprisonment each on the charge of removing letter-boxes.<sup>24</sup>

The Khudai Khidmatgars played an important role during the movement. In Karachi 40 Khudai Khidmatgars were arrested in connection with the picketing of schools and session court on September 17.<sup>25</sup> But their activities were confined only to the picketing of schools and session courts.

The Akalis were divided on the issue of participating in the movement. One section led by Udham Singh Nagoke, Ishar Singh Majhail, Sohan Singh Jalal-Usman and Chanan Singh Arora actively joined the Quit India movement. The other important leaders to participate in the movement were Gurmukh Singh Musaffir, Babu Labh Singh, Darshan Singh Pheruman, Basant Singh Moga, Master Ram Singh and Sardar Rachhpal Singh. But the other section led by Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh was not in favour of the participation in the Congress campaign.<sup>26</sup> However, a few isolated demonstrations were staged by Congress-Akalis from outlying areas in Lahore and Amritsar. A few Akali workers made objectionable speeches at some religious gatherings and were arrested. But the Akali leaders were keeping aloof from the struggle.<sup>27</sup>

The women particularly the girl students played a leading role in the movement. They were arrested in large numbers. A procession of girl students at Amritsar attracted a large crowd and raised slogans against the government.<sup>28</sup> Some of these girls were detained in

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

24. P. N. Chopra, *Quit India Movement : British Secret Documents*, Delhi, 1986, pp. 144, 156.

25. It was a Congress voluntary organisation founded in 1930 by Abdul Ghaffar Khan. It was also called a Red Shirt Movement.

26. *The Tribune*, Sept. 12, 1942.

27. Fauja Singh, "Akalis and the Indian National Congress, 1920-1947," *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XV-II, S. No. 30, Oct. 1981, p. 465.

28. P. N. Chopra, *op. cit.*, p. 150, D. No. 78.

29. Manmohan Kaur, *Women in India's Freedom Struggle*, Delhi, 1985, p. 204-05.

Amritsar Fort where highly objectionable treatment was meted out to them. The prominent women participants of the movement were Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, Pushpa Gujral, Amar Kaur, Budhwati, Harnam Kaur and Channo Devi.<sup>30</sup>

Propaganda for the movement was carried on through widespread distribution of pamphlets and posters. Propaganda material was also circulated by post and it turned out to be an effective device as it could not be easily checked by the authorities. Actually the movement was kept alive during the first month of the next year by the dissemination of propaganda material. Lahore was the production and disseminating centre for this kind of literature.<sup>31</sup> In Karachi two persons were taken into custody while putting stamp of 'Quit India' on currency notes.<sup>32</sup>

The movement dragged on till the close of the year 1943. But it failed to cause any political stir. However, there was greater political excitement on special days connected with the movement. The 9th of every month was observed in the memory of the arrest of Congress leaders for many months. In Lahore, the students took out a procession on 9th and 11th November to commemorate the arrest of Gandhi. This kind of performance was witnessed on 9th December in Gurgaon District too.<sup>33</sup>

All attentions were riveted on Gandhi's 21-day fast commenced on 10th February against the repressive policy of the government and the charges of inciting violence by the Viceroy.<sup>34</sup> There was keen restlessness among the students and urban Hindus as a result of fast. Students went on strike at a number of places. Various Hindu bodies passed resolutions demanding Gandhi's release.<sup>35</sup> Lala Duni Chand M.L.A. (Congress) requested Punjab Government and Government of India to permit him to stay with Gandhi during the period of his fast.<sup>36</sup> Demand for Gandhi's release continued to be voiced even from the non-Congress platforms in the month of February and

30. Neena Sharma, "Women Leaders of Quit India Movement in the Punjab," *Proceedings Punjab History Conference*, March 1987, pp. 421-24.

31. S. L. Malhotra, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

32. *The Tribune*, Feb. 9, 1943.

33. S.L. Malhotra, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. *The Tribune*, Feb. 17, 1943.

March. The All Punjab-Muslim Students Federation passed a resolution demanding the immediate release of Gandhi.<sup>37</sup> Akalis also expressed sympathy with this demand. Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh took part in the conference in Delhi demanding Gandhi's release and resolutions on this line were passed at two Akali meetings held at Amritsar.<sup>38</sup> At Lahore the students of schools and colleges attended the first period daily to pray for Gandhi's health.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from student agitation, the province remained free from any major trouble, expecting some underground activity in a number of districts police investigation revealed the existence of four embryonic gangs in the district of Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and Sargodha which were formed to commit acts of 'sabotage.' But the government took strong measures to prevent the fruition of the plans that were being hatched. For the rest, the campaign was restricted to strong demonstrations and the delivery of objectionable speeches at Congress meetings.<sup>40</sup>

The Quit India Movement in this province was not so strong as in Bombay, U.P., Bihar and Gujrat. A few problems cropped up in the Punjab that diverted its attention from the national struggle. It cannot be denied that the Congress in the Punjab was weak. It failed to consolidate its position after the suspension of Individual Satyagraha. It was finding difficult to enroll enough primary members.<sup>41</sup> Internal dissensions had virtually paralysed it. The faction owing allegiance to Satyapal was engaged in raising a parallel organisation under the name 'Punjab Congress Workers Party,' and a rival volunteer corps.<sup>42</sup>

The support of Iftikhar-ud-Din, President of the Provincial Congress to Rajagopalachari's controversial formula involving the possibility of Pakistan, weakened the faith of Hindus and the Sikhs of this province in the competence of the Congress to prevent the vivisection of India which had made them nervous for its adverse effects on their political and economic status in the Punjab. Master Tara Singh declared at the Akali Conference at Peshawar that the

37. *Ibid.*, Feb. 22, 1943.

38. S.L. Malhotra, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

39. *The Tribune*, Feb. 25, 1943.

40. Home, Pol., 3/34/42 quoted in Y. B. Mathur, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

41. *Ibid.*, 18/5/42 quoted in S.L. Malhotra, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 152-53.



Sikhs should not co-operate with the Congress because it had agreed to establish Pakistan.<sup>43</sup>

The moves to forestall the creation of Pakistan received more attention than any other movement for driving the British out of India in the Punjab. The political controversies raised by Sikandar's formula and the Sikhs demand for Azad Punjab' drowned the cry of 'Quit India.' Besides this the Punjab Government also made efforts to keep the Sikhs away from the movement by conceding some of their demands. An eminent Sikh leader Joginder Singh was offered the membership of Viceroy's expanded council and Baldev Singh was inducted into Punjab Cabinet as a result of the Sikandar-Baldev Singh Pact (June 1942) which conceded some of the communal demands of the Sikhs.<sup>44</sup> Due to this pact only a handful of the Sikhs took part in the movement. The majority held aloof and did nothing to embarrass the Punjab Government.<sup>45</sup>

The local issues such as the agitation of the traders, majority of whom were Hindus, against the Sale Tax diverted their attention from the programme of the Congress. The non-committal and equivocal attitude of the Congress added to their grievances against it. The provincial government even reported in May 1942 that the traders held the Congress responsible for the failure of their agitation against the Sales Tax.<sup>46</sup>

The administration of the Unionist Party kept the Punjabi peasants aloof from the Congress movement. Punjab Premier, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan condemned the Congress for starting a movement during the war and appealed the people to co-operate with the government in war efforts.<sup>47</sup> The Unionist Party passed many Acts to save the poor peasants from the exploitation of the landlords.<sup>48</sup>

The Muslims in the Punjab did not take an active part in the movement. The Muslim League in its meeting from 16 to 20 August, 1942 passed resolution against the 'Quit India Movement.' It

43. *The Tribune*, Dec. 18, 1943.

44. *Ibid.*, June 16, 1942.

45. Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit*, London, 1962, p. 37.

46. Home, Poll., 18/5/42 quoted in S.L. Malhotra, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

47. *The Tribune*, August 14, 1942.

48. *Mitra, op. cit.*, 1938, Vol. II, pp. 196-98, 228-29.

condemned the Congress policy and called it 'open rebellion.'<sup>49</sup> The League in its session held at Karachi in December 1943 decided to counter-act the Congress slogan of 'Quit India' by the slogan of 'Divide and Quit.'<sup>50</sup> Due to such propaganda by the League the Punjabi Muslims did not participate in the Congress movement.

Muslim apathy to the Congress was an all India phenomenon and was not a new factor in the Indian politics. But this time the Ahrars whose support was available to the provincial Congress earlier, decided to keep themselves aloof from the movement.<sup>51</sup>

Apart from the apathy of the Ahrars, the Akalis and the Communists towards the movement, the shortage of funds and lack of organisation were also responsible for the Punjabis being inactive.<sup>52</sup>

The economic unrest owing to war caused much concern in the province. The town dwellers continued to experience difficulty in obtaining supplies at control prices owing to persistent profiteering on the part of trademen. Shortages of wheat and kerosine was mainly confined to towns in the districts of Jullundur, Ambala, Lyallpur and Rawalpindi.<sup>53</sup>

Despite all the indifference, role of Punjab in the Quit India Movement cannot be underestimated. The people strived hand in hand to make the movement successful and worked according to the guidelines of Punjab Provincial Congress Committee. The fact that the Congress demand was supported by the students, women, business class and above all provincial leaders in the Punjab conclusively proves that it was a mass movement and a referendum in favour of its demand for immediate independence.

49. A. Moin Zaidi, *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought in India*, New Delhi, 1976, Vol. V, p. 381.

50. R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *The History and Culture of the Indian Peoples Struggle for Freedom*, Bombay, 1978, Vol. IX, p. 700.

51. S.L. Malhotra, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

52. Statement of Raghubans Singh in P.N. Chopra (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 277.

53. Home, Poll., 18/42 quoted in Y.B. Mathur, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

## Haryanavi Identity in Indian Politics

DAVINDER PAL KAUR\*

India is a Federal State with social and cultural diversities. Regionalism is a common problem in all such diverse societies. The disparities in the economic and the politico-administrative spheres, and linguistic, racial, cultural differences give boost to this problem.<sup>1</sup> Regionalism as a dynamic and multidimensional concept is also generated from a variety of other factors, such as geographical isolation, independent historical heritage, ethnic or religious loyalties etc. Regionalism is also an outcome of some real or perceived sense of internal colonialism, the result of maldevelopment or asymmetrical development. It may be the result of exploitation and power inequality between elite and the peripheral groups in a nation.<sup>2</sup>

In India, diversity is territorially grouped largely on a lingo-cultural basis. In such a society, to find minority groups or regional sub-cultures operating in their own modes of reference and resulting in inter group tensions may be considered to be a natural phenomenon. Generally, linguistic regionalism is more important than regionalism based on religion or caste because the latter acquires communal shape whereas, linguistic demands are commonly acceptable within the frame work of the constitution. However, it is not being argued that in all these cases the regional demands are necessarily based on language. In fact, many a time language may be just a garb to further caste and communal interests.

In India, alongwith the linguistic factor, perception of relative

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1. P.C. Mathur, "Regionalism and National Integration in India," in Satish Chander et al (eds.), *Regionalism and National Integration*, Jaipur, 1976, p. 184.
2. Amba Dutt Pant, "Introduction," in Akhtar Majeed (ed.), *Regionalism : Developmental Tensions in India*, New Delhi, 1984, p. v.

economic backwardness equally contributes to the demand for regional identity. We can take the examples of the States of North East India, Jharkhand area in Bihar and Gorkhaland region in West Bengal where both these factors have played a crucial role. Caste, religion and other factors play an underground role. For example, in Punjab there was always a tussle between the Sikh and the Hindu leadership but it seems that religion was never formally recognised as the major factor, rather, it was language and partly the backwardness of the Haryana region on the basis of which the State of Punjab was bifurcated.

Language serves as one of the most important symbols of identification and distinction. Perhaps, partly because of policy of divide and rule and partly because of the other historical reasons the Britishers made the States linguistically overlapping. But the Indian National Congress was in favour of the formation of linguistic provinces. In 1920, at its Nagpur session, it demanded the reorganisation of the provinces on the linguistic basis. It also decided to reorganise its Pradesh Congress Committees on linguistic basis. These Committees were to use the local language in their work. At the time of 1945-46 elections, the party's election manifesto stated that "the provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on the linguistic and cultural basis." Jawahar Lal Nehru also believed that the education and the culture of the Indians can be developed only through the medium of their own language.

As a consequence of the policy of the Congress party the linguistic elite started agitation for linguistic States immediately after independence. The region of Haryana and Punjab also raised the demand for Hindi speaking and Punjabi speaking States respectively.

To solve the linguistic problem, different commissions were set up from time to time. But it seems that the commissions were more concerned with encouraging the unity and integrity of the country than forming the States on the linguistic basis. The rejection of these demands by the Commissions strengthened these agitations. The Akalis became more militant in their approach and consequently the demand from the Haryana Region also got strengthened.

Various conventions were held to urge upon the Central Government to constitute a Vishal Haryana in 1966, finally the Government decided to reorganise the State of Punjab on the linguistic basis so as to constitute from its territories two States,

namely, Punjab and Haryana States<sup>3</sup> (some parts were given to Himachal Pradesh).

On November 1, 1966, the Punjab was bifurcated into Punjab and Haryana on the linguistic lines. It is the general impression that the demand for a separate State of Haryana was the outcome of the demand for the Punjabi Suba. It may be alright to maintain that the demand for a separate Haryana State got strength from the demand for Punjabi Suba but it would not be correct to say that it was merely an outcome of Punjabi Suba. The idea of a separate State of Haryana originated as early as in 1923-24 when at the All India Jat Students Conference held at Meerut in 1924, Sir Chhotu Ram, Ch. Shadi Ram and Ch. Suraj Mal suggested to have a separate province of Haryana with Delhi as its capital.<sup>4</sup>

Haryana as a separate State came into existence on November 1, 1966, as the seventeenth and one of the smallest States of the Indian Union with an area of 44,222 square kilometers and population of 8.9 millions.<sup>5</sup>

Identity is impossible without authority. So a feeling of identity gets strengthened only from a homogeneous unit like a separate State. In Haryana also such a feeling started developing after 1966 in the beginning in pre-independence period till Partap Singh Kairon's rule it remained in a very feeble form due to its economic, political and cultural backwardness. Even after the formation of the State it could not become as strong as other State's identities because religion, caste and communalism continued to dominate the political culture of the State. Consequently, the struggle for power led to the acute caste conflicts which further led to the Jat-non Jat, agriculturists-non agriculturists, Punjabi—local, and rural-urban conflicts.

Haryana being the peripheral State of Delhi has always been treated as a fiefdom by the rulers. The lower level of political consciousness of its people, the poor cultural content in the social life and the division of its people along the caste lines has made it

3. At the time of bifurcation of Punjab some parts of its territory were also given to Himachal Pradesh.

4. Interview with Ch. Shadi Ram, Advocate, on 15.10.1978, quoted by Gulshan Rai, *Formation of Haryana*, Delhi, 1987, p. 49.

5. *The Spokesman*, V & P 40, 47, July 25, 1966, also see J.N.S. Yadav (ed.), *Studies in History & Politics*, Gurgaon, 1977, p. 75.

ideally suited for the rulers to use it as a tool to further their own narrow ends.

The most important factor in projecting the distinct personality of any State is a centrally located town as its capital which becomes a centre to enrich the social and cultural life of its people. One of the reasons for Haryana has not been able to develop its strong personality is perhaps, it could not build up, its own Capital.

At the time of linguistic reorganisation of the States, Haryana agitated for the transfer of Chandigarh to it which was kept as the Union Territory and an Arya Samaj leader kept counter fast unto death against Sant Fateh Singh urging the Union Government not to bow to Sant's demand for the annexation of Chandigarh and other Hindi speaking areas of Haryana.<sup>6</sup>

Although Haryana was a bye-product of Punjabi Suba to a great extent but the Haryanavis continued to make strong efforts to assert for identity. To give it a proper shape Rao Birender Singh once again revived the demand for Vishal Haryana after becoming Chief Minister in 1967.<sup>7</sup> He felt that Vishal Haryana was the panacea for all the ills like, political instability, meagre resources, economic backwardness and pressure from the Central Government on Chandigarh issue. He, therefore, started a vigorous campaign for Vishal Haryana in the State and the adjoining States.<sup>8</sup> His demand included territories upto the Sutlej river in Vishal Haryana on the plea that Sutlej has been the line of demarcation between Punjab and the rest of India from time immemorial.<sup>9</sup>

The Haryana's ruling United Front, at a meeting of its general body held at Chandigarh on 27th April, 1967, decided to appoint a Commission to go into the entire question of the State's boundaries with Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.<sup>10</sup> Rao Birender Singh said that the dispute could be settled through referendum provided the referendum covered not only Chandigarh but also Fazilka, Kulu, Kangra, Nalagarh and such other areas as legitimately belong to

6. *The Tribune*, Ambala, December 18, 1966.

7. *The Weekend Review*, September 30, 1967, p. 15.

8. *The Vir Arjun*, Jalandhar, September 28, 1967, quoted by Ranbir Singh, "Genesis And Exposition of the Demand for Vishal Haryana," *Kurukshetra University Research Journal*, Vol. 2, 1968, p. 216.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Times of India*, New Delhi, April 28, 1967.

Haryana but had been denied to it.<sup>11</sup> In May 1968, Bansi Lal said that Chandigarh was not negotiable and Haryana would not compromise on the issue because it firmly believed that it owned the city.<sup>12</sup>

At that time, Haryana was backward economically and culturally. So to make the State financially viable and to reunite the people belonging to a common cultural heritage the people of Haryana made efforts to create Vishal Haryana. To strengthen the demand some of the political leaders formed Vishal Haryana Party.

#### Vishal Haryana Party

For the achievement of Vishal Haryana the representatives from Haryana, Delhi, Western U.P. and former princely States of Alwar and Bharatpur formed new political party known as Vishal Haryana Party. At the All India Jat Sabha held at Rohak on 1st January, 1969,<sup>14</sup> demanded the creation of Vishal Haryana on the basis of common language and culture. Prime Minister gave the award giving Chandigarh to Punjab and Abohar and Fazilka to Haryana. Under this award, Haryana was to have a new Capital but was to continue to use Chandigarh for five years.<sup>15</sup> But this award was not implemented leading to resentment among the people of Haryana.

A State can demand greater Autonomy, more financial resources etc., only if it is a separate unit. Although Haryana became a separate unit in 1966 after being colonised for a very long period but it remained backward socially and culturally. It is because of this that it could not develop a strong sense of identity. But slowly and gradually it started asserting for a kind of distinctiveness. It got momentum for a separate identity from the political happenings of its neighbouring State of Punjab. Haryana reacted against the 1970 Award and treated it as an insult to Haryana.

Although Haryana is facing the territorial problem but the issue of water between Haryana and Punjab have been of much greater importance to both the States than the territorial question. Perhaps, it is true that more than territory and water, people are fighting to acquire an identity of their own. But the fact cannot be ignored

11. *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, May 8, 1967.

12. *Statesman*, New Delhi, April 17, 1969.

13. *Times of India*, New Delhi, October 23, 1967.

14. *The Tribune*, Ambala, January 20, 1969.

15. *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, January 30, 1970, p. 1.

that Haryana is an agricultural State and water is the primary need of it.

By the Award of 1976 it was decided that Haryana and Punjab would get 3.5 MAF each. But both the Haryana and Punjab Governments were unhappy with the award and both filed civil suits in the Sureme Court in 1979.<sup>16</sup> In 1981 Prime Minister gave a fresh award. The allocations made were:<sup>17</sup>

Punjab	: 4.22 MAF
Haryana	: 3.50 MAF
Rajasthan	: 8.60 MAF
J & K	: 0.60 MAF
Delhi	: 0.20 MAF

The Award also provided for the completion of Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal by December 31, 1983.<sup>18</sup>

The 1981 Award did not work out and in July 1985, Rajiv-Longowal Accord gave another decision about sharing of water and solving of territorial problem. The leadership of Haryana perceived that Punjab Accord has adversely affected the interests of the Haryanavies. The Accord was taken by the Haryanavies as against Haryana's interests in certain aspects.

The "injustice" done to Haryana by the Rajiv-Longowal Accord led to the resentment among the Haryanavies. This "injustice" further developed a sense of deprivation among the people of Haryana.

To "undo injustice" Devi Lal formed a new organisation known as "Haryana Sangharsh Samiti."

Devi Lal formed a Committee with the help of opposition parties of Haryana to save the interests of the State. Devi Lal called the Accord "Anti Haryana" and described it as "betrayal of Haryana people" and decided to start a mass movement in the State to get Fazilka and Abohar. During the bye-elections of September 22, 1985, Devi Lal raised the issue of Haryanavi identity.

After Devi Lal got elected from Meham, the five opposition parties decided to launch Nyaya Yudh to protest against "injustice"

16. Vinay Kumar Malhotra, 'Haryana : Territorial and Water Claims' in Gopal Singh (ed.), *Punjab To-day*, p. 369.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 370.

18. Kuldip Nayar and Khushwant Singh, *Tragedy of Punjab : Operation Blue Star and After*, New Delhi, 1984, p. 47.



done to Haryana under Punjab Accord.

Different Commissions were set up by the Central Government from time to time to solve the territorial and river water problems. But no Commission could satisfy the people of either of the State. Devi Lal while addressing a news conference at Chandigarh on 17th June 1986, said that the Punjab Accord and Venketramiah Commission had laid the "Foundation of Khalistan."<sup>19</sup> He described it as a "criminal joke."

The major issue raised by the Lok Dal leader Devi Lal during elections was that of Haryanavi identity alongwith the territorial and river water issues. Devi Lal tried to project this feeling among the Haryanavis that the State of Haryana has always been used a fildom by the Centre since he was denied the opportunity to form the Government in the State in 1982.

Devi Lal injected the feeling among the Haryanavis that the Centre has always used the State as its personal estate and this is the "insult" of the people of Haryana. He launched the protest movements against the "injustice" done to the State under the Punjab Accord, which lasted for two years. This way Devi Lal mobilised the public opinion and slowly and gradually built up his image in the State as pro-Haryana and posed the Congress (I) as anti-Haryana. The struggle launched by him further loosened the caste-rigidities and people fought as Haryanavis for their common cause.

Devi Lal launched action programmes one after the other. The Haryanavis responded to his call with enthusiasm. Whether it was the long march on foot to Delhi accompanied by lakhs of people drawn from all sections of the Harvanavies or his call for "Rasta Roko" movement or a Haryana Bandh" or "Samasat Haryana Samelan" at Jind or "All Haryanavi Shaheedi Conference" at Rohtak, each and every time the Haryanavies in general and its peasantry in particular gathered in lakhs, gave their total support to his call rendering all the programmes a resounding success. The greatest achievement of the programmes launched by Lok Dal lies in the fact that the people of Haryana are on the march as never before.

19. Suraj Mal, "Haryana Sangharsh Samiti ; A Study of its Composition and Role," an unpublished dissertation submitted to Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, 1988, p. 39.

Devi Lal maintained "I on my part assure the people of Haryana that we will continue our struggle to defend their legitimate interests and be worthy of the trust they have reposed in us." In 1987 elections, people voted for the collective regional identity of Haryana.

In the pre-independence period the identity feeling was not sharp among the Haryanavies, though it was there. It remained weak due to backwardness of the region and the social and political unconsciousness among the people. After the formation of State the feeling of identity got strengthened because identity resides in a homogenous unit like a State. The other reasons for the formation of identity after the creation of the State, may be that the people have become politically conscious or it may be the outcome of the growing crisis in our socio-economic structure.

Dr D. R. Chaudhary maintains that Haryanavi identity has yet to acquire a concrete shape. The elite of Haryana can contribute positively to its identity only if they maintain the secular character of their struggle otherwise they may reduce it to mere chauvinism.

## The Issue of Linguistic Reorganisation in Punjab (1947-1966) : A Study of Administration's Strategies

DR S. S. TIWANA\*

In the pre-partition days, there was a competition among the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs, the three religious groups in the State, for representation in the legislative bodies and for share in the services. As representation in the governmental bodies and the services was granted on the basis of communal identity, the contest among the three communities proceeded along religious lines. It led to the growth of communal organisations among the three entities. In this process of competing, these communities became increasingly conscious of their separate identity and political rights. As the time for Independence approached, the Sikhs tried to seek such territorial regions as would protect their interests vis-a-vis the other communities. They even demanded the creation of a Sikh State "for the preservation and protection of the religious, cultural and economic rights of the Sikh nation."<sup>1</sup> But because of the dispersal of Sikh population in all parts of Punjab, the demand for a 'Sikh Homeland' was not accepted by the colonial rulers. Their historic rivalry with the Muslims prevented them from joining Pakistan. They decided to cast their lot with the Indian Union in the hope that the Congress Government would honour its promises and ensure a glow of freedom to them. In this fond hope, the leadership of the Akali Dal paid no heed to the overtures of Jinnah and some British officers who promised favourable treatment to the Sikhs in the event of their parting company with the Congress.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Working Committee Resolution, Quoted in Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1983, p. 302.

2. *Ibid.*

As a large number of Sikhs migrated from Western to Eastern Punjab on the eve of partition, the percentage of the Sikh population in the central districts of Indian Punjab increased subsequently. Increase in their numerical strength placed the Sikhs in the position where they could demand political concessions from the Federal Government. It was precisely for this reason that the Shiromani Akali Dal decided to join the Congress Ministry in Punjab after partition. However, the change in the position of the Sikhs roused apprehensions in the minds of Hindus of Punjab and they became the main opponents of the territorial and political demands of the Sikh community. The leadership of the Congress Party in the State as well as at the Centre was not prepared to ignore the Hindu view-point while dealing with the religious and political demands of the Sikh community. This attitude of the Congress leadership alienated the Sikh community and caused stresses and strains so far as smooth relationship between the State and the Central Government was concerned. A brief survey of the religious and political demands of the Sikh community in the post-Independence era and the attitudes of the Hindus and the Congress Government towards these demands will provide us with a frame-work to analyse the nature of the Linguistic Problem in Punjab.

The Sikhs had joined the Indian Union, hoping that no constitutional arrangement would be forced on them without their consent and their special privileges as a minority community would be protected.<sup>3</sup> But the dominant trend in the Constituent Assembly was not in favour of giving any special rights to the minorities, particularly to the Sikhs. The secular basis of the Constitution also militated against the grant of such privileges. This step caused considerable hurt to the Sikh psyche and the Akali members in the Constituent Assembly expressed it by refusing to put their signatures on the Constitution.<sup>4</sup> The failure of the Constituent Assembly to protect the special privileges of the Sikhs alienated the Sikh Community from the national mainstream. They developed a feeling that the Congress leadership had betrayed them and failed to keep its pre-Independence promises. Further insult was added to their injuries when the Government took certain policy

3. Jaswant Singh (ed.), *Master Tara Singh Jiwan Sangharsh Te Udesch* (Punjabi), Amritsar, 1972, p. 51.

4. Satya M. Rai, *Punjab Since Independence*, Delhi, 1986, p. 253.

decisions which went against Sikh interests. In a confidential policy circular issued by the Governor of Punjab to the Deputy Commissioners on October 10, 1947, the whole of the Sikh community was labelled as lawless and a menace to the peace-loving Hindus of Punjab.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Presidential Ordinance issued in 1950 deprived the Sikh scheduled castes of their privileges and reservations. There were allegations of discrimination against the Sikhs in the services also. Red tapism and delay in the resettlement work created serious difficulties for Sikh migrants. The Sikhs felt that they had been let down and given a raw deal in the distribution of territories between the Hindus and the Muslims. Master Tara Singh gave expression to Sikh sentiments in the following words : "Every minority except the Sikhs had been given justice. The Muslim demand was Pakistan, they got it. The Scheduled castes wanted representation on population basis, they got it. The Sikhs demanded that they would not like to be dominated by any single community and they were being discriminated against for repeating the same demand as the Hindus had supported before partition and with which the Congress sympathised."<sup>6</sup>

It was in this situation that the Akali leadership began to chalk out alternative strategies for the protection of the rights of the Sikh community. The two issues which came handy to them for this purpose were those of language and re-organisation of the State on linguistic basis. The Akalis demanded that there should be facility for the development of Punjabi language so that their separate religious identity and culture were protected. Similarly, they demanded the creation of a Punjabi-speaking State so that the Sikhs could enjoy political power of their own.

#### Language Problem

In pre-partition Punjab, two social reform movements gained strength in the Punjab. The Arya Samaj struck roots among the Hindu urban population and propagated the use of Hindi in the Devanagari script. The cause of Punjabi, on the other hand, was taken up by Chief Khalsa Diwan, a religious organisation of the Sikhs, during the same period. This organisation gave a religious overtone to Punjabi despite the fact that it was spoken by all the people living in the

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5. Rajinder Kaur, *Sikh Grievances and Demands : A Brief Accounts*, A leaflet published by Secretary Ishtri Akali Dal, New Delhi (n. d.), p. 2.

6. *The Tribune*, October 20, 1949.

province. The court language and medium of instruction in all the schools of Punjab was Urdu. The vernacular newspapers, representing different viewpoints and political interests, were printed in Urdu in the pre-partition days.<sup>7</sup>

The language, however, got linked with communalisation of politics in the province. In the ever-growing communal atmosphere, the demands for giving important place to Hindi and Punjabi gained momentum rapidly. Ultimately, the Union Government agreed to accede these demands and recognised the status of both these languages in the educational curriculum under Sikander-Baldev Singh Pact.<sup>8</sup>

Punjabi language could not acquire the status which other languages such as Bengali and Telugu enjoyed in their respective regions. Language is regarded as a unifying force which cuts across sectarian and communal division. In the case of Punjab, however, the language issue further deepened the existing communal divide.

The Sikhs resented parity between the two languages. They argued that the spoken language of the Punjab was Punjabi and most of the literature of the Punjab was in Gurmukhi script; therefore, Punjabi in Gurmukhi script should be declared the sole language of Punjab. But the Hindus opposed it and did not agree to even very reasonable suggestions. The Senate in the Panjab University at its meeting held on June 9, 1949 rejected by majority vote the proposal of Punjabi being adopted as the medium of instruction.<sup>9</sup>

#### Sachar Formula

In October 1949, the Punjab Government submitted its proposals, popularly known as "Sachar Formula"<sup>10</sup> on the language issue.

7. The position of Urdu, however, was limited to the male Punjabi population of the province. Among non-Muslim women, Urdu was not so well known. Hindi was rather widely known among the urban Hindus because of the influence of the Arya Samaj. In the rural areas, although the number of literate women was very small, the knowledge of Gurmukhi script was rather more widely prevalent, irrespective of the religious affiliations. For details, see Satya M. Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-70.

8. Amarnath Vidyalkar *Bahmi Itihad Aur Regional Formula*, Jalandhar, 1956, p. 76.

9. A. C. Kapoor, *The Punjab Crisis*, New Delhi 1985 p. 153.

10. Naranjan Singh, *Papers Relating to Hindu Agitation in Punjab*, Chandigarh, Public Relations Department, 1957, p. 11. The proposals were signed by Bhim Sen Sachar, Gopi Chand Bhargava, Ujjal Singh and Kartar Singh.

According to this formula, the State was divided into two linguistic regions, Punjabi and Hindi. The language of the region was to be the medium of instruction in all the schools upto matriculation stage and the children were required to learn the other language at the secondary stage. The choice for the medium of instruction in the educational institutions was left entirely to the parents or guardians of the pupils. The formula, however, was not obligatory for unaided recognised schools where the medium of instruction was to be determined by the management concerned. It was decided that English and Urdu would remain the official and court languages and were to be progressively replaced by Hindi and Punjabi.

The Sachar Formula was hailed by the Sikhs as a welcome step though they criticised the right of the parents to choose and determine the medium of instruction for the education of their children. The proposals, however, met with severe criticism at the hands of the Hindu organisations like the Arya Samaj, the Jana Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha. In order to counter the Akali demand of the Punjabi Suba and the claim of Punjabi as the regional language of the Punjabi-speaking area,<sup>11</sup> these organisations and Hindu vernacular press started a campaign that the Hindus of this area should declare Hindi as their mother-tongue.<sup>12</sup> By disowning the Punjabi language, they made it the language of the Sikhs and communalised the very issue of language.

#### **Regional Formula**

The Congress, in order to accommodate the communalists of both types, worked out a Regional Formula in 1956. This Formula divided the State of Punjab into two regions, namely Punjabi-speaking and Hindi-speaking regions.<sup>13</sup> The Formula provided for one legislature for the whole State of Punjab which would be the sole law-making body for the entire State and one Governor for the State, aided and advised by a Council of Ministers responsible to the State Legislative Assembly for the entire field of administration. There was a proposal to make a Punjabi and Hindi zone in Punjab, having different regional Councils. The Councils would have powers, excluding those of law and administration, tax and finances, and the decisions

11. *Akali Patrika*, October 22, 1949.

12. *Ibid.*, January 23, 1951.

13. The outline of the scheme of the Regional Formula was laid on the table of Lok Sabha on April 3, 1957, and came into force on November 1957.

of these Councils would be binding on the Cabinet. Any dispute would be settled by the Governor. The language of Punjabi region would be Punjabi and the script would be Gurmukhi. In PEPSU, the Punjabi formula would be applicable to the Punjab zone and the Sachar Formula in the Hindi zone. There would be no difference between Hindu and Sikh scheduled castes.<sup>14</sup> The Punjab Government would establish two separate departments for developing Punjabi and Hindi languages. The general safeguards proposed for linguistic minorities would be applicable to Punjab like those in other States of the Union of India. In accordance with and in furtherance of its policy to promote the growth of all regional languages, the Central Government would encourage the development of the Punjabi language.<sup>15</sup>

The Regional Formula was accepted by the Akalis. Master Tara Singh, while explaining the reasons for accepting the Formula, said that it fulfilled the aspirations of the Sikhs to an extent and at the same time did not give them any opportunity to dominate others, a power which if given, might make them undemocratic and narrow-minded.<sup>16</sup>

The Regional Plan was not accepted by the Hindu communalists and the people of Haryana. The Hindu Mahasabha at a Conference held at Karnal on June 25, 1956 resolved that the scheme of the Regional Formula was no solution to the Punjab problem and was also no solution to the peculiar backwardness of Haryana.<sup>17</sup> In March-April, 1956, Panjab Jana Sangh leader, Balramji Das Tondon observed fast against the Regional Formula. The Government of India was accused of yielding to the pressure of the Akalis by relegating Hindi as a second language in Punjabi-speaking region. Partap Singh Kairon was also against the Regional Formula and was in favour of Maha Punjab.<sup>18</sup>

It was on the basis of this Formula that the Akalis gave up their demand for a separate Punjabi Suba and decided to eschew politics. The legislative wing of the Akalis joined the Congress in 1957 and fought elections on the Congress ticket in 1957 General Elections.

14. Kshitish, *Storm in Punjab*, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 118-119.

15. A. C. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

16. *The Tribune*, March 16, 1956.

17. Harbans Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

18. Kahitish *op. cit.*, p. 119.



In April, 1957, after the formation of the new Ministry, the Hindu Raksha Samiti started demonstrations against the Regional Formula. The Hindi press played a big role in fanning the Hindu satyagraha. Concerned at the ferocity of this agitation, Giani Kartar Singh warned that if the Regional Formula failed, the Punjabi Suba Morcha would be revived. Lal Chand Sabharwal threatened that if Punjabi was imposed, the Morcha would reach the towns and the streets. The Arya Samaj threw itself completely into the agitation and agitators' groups reached Chandigarh from even outside Punjab. Speaker Hukam Singh said that this agitation was a conspiracy aimed at finishing off Punjabi. Swami Atmanand said, "The Regional Formula means making Sikhistan of Punjab and Sikhistan means Khalistan. It being a border state, this conspiracy will not be allowed to succeed in Punjab."

The Regional Plan, thus, met with severe opposition from the Hindu sectarian groups and parties. The Government, too, was reluctant to implement it honestly on account of opposition from within. Faced with the opposition from the Hindu communal sections and unwillingness of the Punjab Government to enhance the status of Punjabi language, the Akalis once again renewed the demand for Punjabi Suba.

#### **Demand for Punjabi Suba**

The common programme (fight for freedom) and a common enemy (the British Government) kept the Akalis close to the Indian National Congress during the pre-partition phase. Strains developed in the Akali-Congress friendship after the country got independence. Akalis' anxiety to capture political power at the provincial level and Congress' unwillingness to concede and accommodate the Akalis' claim often resulted in mutual quarrel and led to Akali agitations against the Congress Government. The Centre's refusal to re-organise Punjab on linguistic basis after acceptance of the principle of linguistic states provided the Akali leadership with a strong argument to agitate for the creation of a Punjabi-speaking State. Failure of the two experiments at coalition with the Congress in forming the Government in Punjab further heightened among Akali leadership a sense of alienation. Akali Dal launched an agitation for Punjabi Suba in 1955 in which 12,000 people were arrested. Recognising the extensive popular support of the Sikh Community behind Akali Dal, the Government conceded the Demand for the formation of a Regional Comm-

ittee within the Punjab legislature in 1956. The Regional Formula allowed the two zones, Hindi and Punjabi, a certain measure of autonomy in all matters except law and order, taxation and finance. The Akali Dal gave a trial to this scheme but got disenchanted soon. After parting company with the Congress, the Akali Dal launched another massive campaign in May 1960<sup>19</sup> in which over 57,000 people were arrested.<sup>20</sup> It was during this struggle for the creation of a Punjabi Suba that Sant Fateh Singh appeared on the political scene. He introduced a new convincing note into the Akali agitation for the Punjabi Suba by presenting this demand on purely linguistic considerations.

"We are not concerned about percentage. We want the Punjabi Suba to comprise an area where Punjabi language is spoken regardless of the fact whether the Sikhs are in a majority or minority." This statement of Sant Fateh Singh reassured many Hindus and brought them to his view-point. When Sant Fateh Singh noticed that in spite of his having gained the confidence of the Hindus, the Congress Government stood firmly opposed to the Akali move, he decided to go on a fast unto death on December 18, 1960. Before starting his fast, the Sant is said to have advised the Sikhs to remain peaceful in case of any eventuality. "Every particle of the country is ours and any damage to it is damage to ourselves" declared the Sant. On December 31, 1960, the Prime Minister of India while maintaining that Punjabi was the main and dominant language of Punjab, declined to concede the demand for further division of the already truncated Punjab. However, the Sant was persuaded to break his fast on 22nd day of his fast on an assurance from the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to concede the demands. Later, the Sant had three meetings with the Prime Minister on February 8, 1961, March 1, 1961 and May 12, 1961. In all these meetings, the Prime Minister assured him that the Government would do everything for flourishing of Punjabi language in Punjab. But so far as the demand of Punjabi Suba was concerned, the Prime Minister

19. In order to thwart the agitation, Master Tara Singh was arrested by the Punjab Government and kept under preventive detention for arousing the religious sentiments of the Sikhs against the Hindus. He was to lead the first Sahidi Jatha to Delhi.

20. The Government on the contrary had maintained that only 23,000 men were arrested. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1977, p. 299.

had the impression that it could not be justified from any point of view

Master Tara Singh, who felt let down by Nehru and the Congress, now himself undertook a fast unto death on August 15, 1961 to press the demand for Punjabi Suba. The Prime Minister in his appeal to the nation on the independence day made a special appeal to the people of Punjab not to be carried away by parochial feelings, mere emotions or wrong sentiments and reminded them that even a good thing becomes bad if wrong means are used to achieve it. On August 28, 1961, the Prime Minister stated,

"It has been repeatedly said that there was discrimination against the Sikhs. though instances of these have not been pointed out, I suggest, however, that if there was any such apprehension, a high level enquiry could be made into this matter to find out if there has been any such discrimination."

Master Tara Singh was also persuaded to break his fast after 48 days on October 1, 1961. On October 31, 1961, the Government passed a resolution appointing a Commission and it was published in the *Gazette of India* on November 4, 1961. On November 9, 1961, the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal, however, passed the following resolution :

This meeting of the Shiromani Akali Dal working Committee feels amazed at the attitude of the Government in forming a high power Commission, the personnel of which is completely different from that which was communicated to the negotiators, the mediators and Master Tara Singh.

The committee also regrets the attitude of Government in keeping vague that real issue in terms of reference which led to the fast of Master Tara Singh, the question pertaining to the non-formation of the Punjabi-speaking State as a clear discrimination on a social plane. The Committee calls upon the Government to make due amends in their attitude in the spirit as shown during the course of negotiations by having mutually-agreed-to personnel of the Commission and consider the real issue so as to enable the Shiromani Akali Dal to co-operate with the Commission and thus put forward their case for a Punjabi-speaking State, a cause for which they have been struggling and for which they have suffered immensely and which is based on principles of equality and justice.

On the basis of the above resolution, the Akali Dal decided to boycott the Commission. Master Tara Singh was stated to have emphatically said that if the Commission's personnel were changed, the Akali Dal would be prepared to place its case for the Punjabi Suba. He further stated, "The only discrimination against the Sikhs was about the non-formation of the Punjabi Suba."

Some of the parties like the Punjab Hindi Raksha Samiti, the Haryana Lok Samiti, Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha and the All-India Bhartiya Jana Sangh also put forward complaints of discrimination against their community (non-Sikhs). Shri Abdul Gani Dar, MLA also submitted a memorandum complaining of discrimination against the Muslims.

The Commission gave its report on January 9, 1962, and found that there was no basis for any charge of discrimination against the Sikhs and came to the conclusion that Punjabi Suba was a camouflage for the demand of a Sikh State. The failure to coerce the Government led to mutual recriminations among Akali leaders and division within the Akali Dal. The Akali Dal even lost some electoral support in the third General Elections. The division within the Akali Dal now deepened and finally in 1962, Sant Fateh Singh set up a rival Akali Dal against that of Master Tara Singh.

The Master Akali Dal faction convened a conference at Ludhiana on July 4, 1965, which recalled that the Sikh people agreed to merge in the common Indian nationality on the explicit understanding of being accorded a constitutional status of co-sharers in the Indian sovereignty along with the majority community and that solemn undertaking now stood cynically repudiated by the Congress Government. The conference further resolved that there was no alternative left for the Sikhs in the interest of self-preservation but "to frame their political demand for securing a self-determined political status within the Republic of the Union of India."

In successive years, Sant Fateh Singh was successful in building a new coalition among the Akalis and defeated Master Tara Singh in S G P C elections in early 1965. He now pressed with great vigour the Punjabi Suba demand but he and his lieutenants increasingly emphasised that they, in contradiction to Master Tara Singh and his followers, were interested in a linguistic state as an integral part of the Indian Union.

On account of Chinese aggression in 1962, the Punjabi Suba

demand went into the background. In March, 1963, the Punjabi Himachal Jana Sangh working Committee demanded that the Provincial Assembly be dissolved the Punjab be made a centrally administered State.

Jawaharlal Nehru died on May 27, 1964. In June, 1964, Partap Singh Kairon had to quit following strictures passed against him by the Das Commission. Both these leaders were against the creation of Punjabi Suba. After the death of Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri became the Prime Minister who held talks with Sant Fateh Singh. He took the stand that the Government was ready to do anything for the advancement of Punjabi language and to look into any Sikh grievances but felt that the issue of Punjabi Suba had been thoroughly examined before and there was no basis for its establishment. Then in August 1965 Sant Fateh Singh issued an ultimatum to the Government to accept the Suba demand within twentyfive days, otherwise he would go on a fast unto death effective from September 10, for fifteen days and, in case he survived the fast, he would then resort to self-immolation by burning himself.<sup>21</sup> From amongst the opponents of Punjabi Suba, there came threats of counter-fasts if the Government conceded the demand. Sikh leaders in the Congress party were themselves divided over the issue. Some fifteen Congress Sikh MLA's met to urge the Government to accept the Punjabi Suba demand,<sup>22</sup> while other Sikh MLA's dissociated themselves from this stand.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, the conflict with Pakistan took a violent form and, as it intensified in early September 1965, Akali leaders asked Sant Fateh Singh to give up the idea of his proposed fast in view of the emergency facing the nation. Union Home Minister, Gulzari Lal Nanda also announced that "the whole question could be examined afresh." The Sant finally withdrew his threat of self-immolation and called upon the Punjabis in general and the Sikhs in particular to rise in the defence of the country.

#### Three Member Cabinet Committee

Immediately after the ceasefire with Pakistan, Home Minister Nanda announced the establishment of a three-member cabinet Committee which would, with the advice of a Consultative Committee drawn from among members of Parliament and headed by Lok Sabha

21. *The Tribune*, August 17, 1965.

22. *Ibid.*, September 1, 1965.

23. *Ibid.*, September 3, 1965.

Speaker, Hukam Singh,<sup>24</sup> seek a solution to State re-organisation in Punjab. There was a criticism of the Consultative Committee of MP's not only because it attempted to assume an independent role but also because its Chairman had been associated with the Akali Dal and the Punjabi Suba demand earlier.<sup>25</sup> The Congress Government and party in the Punjab, though divided, officially stood for the retention of the status quo. The Jana Sangh continued to oppose any plan that would result in the division of Punjab. Meanwhile, the Congress High Command also started giving consideration to the Punjabi Suba issue<sup>26</sup> and appointed a three-member Committee of its own, consisting of Kamaraj, Dhebar and Nanda, to help in the solution of the problem.

The Consultative Committee consisting of MP's was expected to submit its report by mid-March, 1966, but by the end of February, Sant Fateh Singh began to express dissatisfaction at the slow pace with which the work of the Committee was proceeding and threatened to revive his plan of self-immolation unless a decision favouring the establishment of Punjabi Suba was made. Then, on March 9, 1966 the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution recommending that "out of the existing State of Punjab, a State with Punjabi as State language be formed. The Government is requested to take necessary steps for this purpose."<sup>27</sup>

Though Morarji Desai, Ram Subhag Singh Biju Patnaik voted against the resolution, it clearly reflected the dominant trend in the organisation. The resolution was vehemently opposed by the Jana Sangh and it started an agitation for the continuation of the status quo in Punjab. Its general Secretary, Yagya Dutt Sharma, began a fast upto death and the agitation spread to various parts of the State.<sup>28</sup>

The Consultative Parliamentary Committee submitted its report on March 18, 1965 recommending that the Punjabi-speaking region be constituted into unilingual Punjab State, that the hill areas be merged with Himachal Pradesh, and that the Haryana region be formed into

24. *Ibid.*, September 24, 1965.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*, February 14, 1966.

27. *Hindu Weekly Review*, March 14, 1966.

28. Staya Pal Dang, "Punjabi Suba Movement," a paper presented at a Seminar in Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, January 26-28, 1982 (unpublished).

a Haryana State.<sup>29</sup> On March 22, 1965, Home Minister Nanda announced in the Lok Sabha that the Government had accepted in principle the re-organisation of the State on linguistic basis,<sup>30</sup> and on April 18, he stated that the Government proposed to create by October 1, 1966 two states, Punjab and Haryana, out of the existing State of Punjab while the hill areas contiguous to Himachal Pradesh would be merged in that State.

#### Shah Commission

Later on, a three-man Commission<sup>31</sup> headed by Justice J.C. Shah was appointed for the demarcation of the boundaries and it gave its report on June 5, 1966.

Two of the three members of the Commission recommended Chandigarh for Haryana, Una, Anandpur and Bhakra were given to Himachal Pradesh, Kharar Tehsil was recommended for Haryana. The Akali reaction to the report was sharp. Gurdial Singh Dhillon threatened to resign from his position. Kamraj, Darbara Singh and some other Central Ministers were in favour of giving Chandigarh to Punjab. But in June, 1966 Chandigarh was declared a Union Territory. Master Tara Singh and some Ministers of Punjab threatened to resign over this issue. All the MLA's of Haryana also issued similar threats. Sant Fateh Singh, too, demanded Chandigarh for Punjab. In August 1966, Lok Sabha passed the Punjab Re-organisation Act. Speaking on the Bill, Bhupesh Gupta and Hiren Mukherjee (CPI) wanted Chandigarh to be given to Punjab and Peter Alvares (PSP) said it should be in Haryana. Opposing the Bill, Sardar Kapur Singh said :

The Sikhs cannot accept it because : (1) it is born of sin, (2) an untrained midwife has helped in its birth, and (3) it is against national interest and attacks national unity. This is the betrayal of the Sikhs who have protected the Hindu race.<sup>32</sup>

On November 1, 1966, Punjab was divided once again. This broken-up and disfigured Punjab was a sight that wounded the hearts of both Sikhs and Hindus. The Punjabi Hindu had desired a Maha Punjab, the Sikhs in spite of being 56 per cent in the new Punjab,

29. *Hindu Weekly Review*, March 21, 1966.

30. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1966.

31. Justice J. C. Shah as Chairman with Subimal Dutt and M. M. Phillip as members was appointed for demarcation of the boundaries.

32. Kapur Singh, *Great Betrayal of the Sikhs*, Chandigarh, (n. d.), p. 7.

were unhappy because the areas that the Akalis had been aspiring for in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir were denied to them. Creation of Punjabi Suba did not fully solve the Akali problem. Chandigarh and some other Punjabi-speaking areas were not transferred to Punjab and control of Bhakra Dam and some Head-works was taken over by the Centre. This gave the Akalis a grouse to continue their agitation for getting these demands conceded.



## Role of Governor during Coalition Governments in Punjab, 1967-71

DR J. A. KHAN\*

Since the founding fathers of the Indian Constitution had established the British model of parliamentary government both at the Centre and in the states, they expected the Governor of a state to play similar role as that of the President of India. However, the position of Governor of a state is different from the Union President in two respects : (i) He has been vested with certain discretionary powers, which the President does not have ; and, (ii) In view of the federal framework of the country, the Governor is required to act as a link between the centre and the federating units. While performing both of these functions (i.e. discretionary as well as an agent of the centre in the states), the Governor is not obliged to act according to the advice of his Council of Ministers. Thus, unlike the President of India, the Governor of a state taking advantage of his above position, may use his discretion on many occasions in regard to certain matters of the State.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The Governor act in his discretion on various occasions, viz, while selecting a Chief Minister before the formation of a Ministry; dismissal of a ministry; dissolution of a legislative assembly; asking information from the Chief Minister relating to legislative and administrative matters; asking the Chief Minister to submit for consideration of Council of Ministers a matter on which a decision has been taken by a Minister but which had not been considered by the Council; refusing to give assent to a Bill passed by the state legislature and sending it back for reconsideration ; reserving a Bill passed by the state legislature for assent of the President ; seeking instructions from the President before promulgating an ordinance dealing with certain matters advising the President for promulgation of emergency and in the case of Governor of Assam, certain administrative matters connected with tribal areas. See, Iqbal Narain, *Twilight or Dawn : The Political Change in India*, (1967-71, Agra, 1972, p. 94.

As a matter of fact, the actual role and position of a Governor in the state largely depended upon the party complexion of the state government and the political situation prevailing in the state at a particular time. Post experience of the working of Indian politics in the various states is an evidence of what has been said above. It shows that when the state wing of a ruling party at the centre was at the helm of affairs in the state with a sufficient majority in the Assembly, the Governor could not find even a single chance to make his existence felt. Under such type of situations Governor's position was similar to the President of India. Such position prevailed in almost all the Indian states including Punjab between 1947-67, when Congress Party was ruling at the Centre and in the states with sufficient majorities, simultaneously. On the contrary, when the state government belonged to a party or parties other than the party which was in power at the Centre, the Governor got several chances to play an effective role in the state politics. Again, even during the rule of the state governments belonging to the latter category, he found more such chances under the coalition governments when the gap between the strength of ruling parties and the opposition was small and commitment of the legislators to their respective political parties was less reliable and therefore the Governor had to act as an umpire on many occasions.

The major theme of this paper is to analyse the working of Governor in the State of Punjab during the period 1967 to 1971 when at the state level Akali led coalition governments were in power and the reigns of Union government, as well as of the majority of the states was still in the hands of the Congress.

#### **Coalition Governments in Punjab and the Working of Governor**

During 1967-71, four coalition governments were formed in the state. All of them belonged to the non-Congress parties. Thus, during this period, it happened for the first time in the post-independence history of Punjab that the ruling parties at the state level were different from the party in power at the Centre. It was bound to have some impact on the working of Governor, who was to act as an agent of the centre in the states. Additionally, the phenomenon of coalition parties in the State had brought in its train political instability owing to shipping alliances, heterogeneous political coalitions and rampant defections. This peculiar political situation provided an appropriate setting for the Governor to make full use of his discretionary powers and even 'to act out of his appointed role in the constitution.' Thus

as Iqbal Narain writes :

In the new political situation, the office of the Governor which had suffered a relative eclipse during the pre-1967 era of one-party dominance, thus suddenly shot into both importance and controversy.<sup>2</sup>

The working of Governor during this period in the state may be analysed as follows :

#### **Appointment of the Chief Minister**

During the period of one-party dominance of the Congress at the Centre as well as in the states till 1967 the Governors had no role to play in the appointment of the Chief Ministers in the state. Since, during this period, after every general elections (i.e. 1952, 1957 and 1962), the Congress Party secured majority of seats and was able to elect its leader without any difficulty, the Governors had no option but to administer the oath of office and secrecy to an elected leader of the Congress Legislative Party (CLP). However, the situation changed thereafter. Between 1967-71 there emerged many situations in which the Governor was called upon to play an important role in this regard. For instance, after the fourth general elections held in 1967, no party or group of parties could secure majority of seats in the State Assembly. The Congress was five short of an absolute majority, i. e., 48 out of 104, and the alliance formed by the Akali Dal (Sant Group) with the help of CPI, Republicans and the Samyukta Socialist

2. Before 1967 there were only two instances in Punjab when the Governor became controversial. Firstly, it had happened when on October 10, 1947 the Governor of the state Mr. Chandu Lal Trivedi issued a circular which casted a bad expersion on the Sikh community as a whole. The Akali Dal and the Sikhs strongly criticised the Governor for his action. The circular stated : "Sikhs as a community are a lawless people and are menance to the law abiding Hindus in the Province, Deputy Commisisoners should take special measures against them. "See *Times of India*, October 15, 1947. Also see H. S. Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal ; Itihas (Punjabi)*. Chandigarh, 1981, p. 208.

Secondly, It happended when the Governor V. N. Gadgil in a speach at Mukatsar on the eve of general elections in the state observed that if Nehru was voted to power again that would have "beneficial effect on the cause of peace in the world." This portion of Governor's speach was strongly resented by the Communist Party of India, as it was considered to be a praise for the Congress Party in Punjab. The Governor was criticised for acting in partial manner and doing favour to the ruling party. See V.D. Mahajan, *The Constitution of India*, Lucknow, 1971, p. 477.

Party (SSP) for electoral purposes commanded only 33 seats.<sup>3</sup> This coalitional situation for the first time offered the Governor a golden chance to exercise his discretion in the appointment of the Chief Minister (C.M.). The Governor, Dharam Vira, exercised it in favour of the ruling party at the Centre (i.e., Congress) and invited the leader of the single largest CLP to form the government. There could be a problem, if Gian Singh Rarewala (leader of the CLP in Punjab) had actually accepted the invitation and formed the ministry.<sup>4</sup> But the situation was saved, when Rarewala showed his inability to do so.<sup>5</sup> After his refusal, Gurnam Singh, leader of the United Front (UF) comprising all the non-Congress parties in the state, was invited to form the government and the matter ended there.

Another instance of the use of discretion by the Governor in the appointment of C.M. in the state can be found in the case of Gurnam Singh (the C.M.), when conceding the loss of majority in the Assembly due to defection of 17 members of the U.F., he resigned on 22 November 1967. The Governor gave the out-going C.M. another chance to form the government. He said that "he would be personally happy if he (Gurnam Singh) could again form the government himself."<sup>6</sup> While accepting the offer Gurnam Singh asked for sometime more to which the Governor agreed (i.e., two full days or till evening of November 24). However, the Governor, while he should have stayed in the state capital and made himself available for consultations with different political leaders at this critical juncture, went to New Delhi, to seek, it was as alledged a directive from the Centre.

Finding that the Governor had gone to New Delhi, Gurnam Singh

3. The position of other parties in the Assemby after the election was; Jan Sangh=9; C. P. I.=3; Akali Dal=2; and Independents=9. See *Punjab Election Office Records*.

4. There is no unanimity among the scholars on this issue, who should be invited first to form the government in the situation where the previously ruling party is defeated at the polls and the opposition party or parties are not able to command clear cut majority. For detailed debate on the issue, see, A. G. Noorani, *Indian's Constitution and Politics*, Bombay, 1970, pp. 17-22.

5. Rarewala told the Press, "I accept that the majority is with the People's United Front. I am satisfied that the three Republicans and six out of nine Independents are with the United Front." See *The Statesman*, March 8, 1967.

6. D. C. Pavate, *My Days As Governor*, Delhi, 1970, p. 73.

too rushed to the capital, believing that the centre of state government decisions and political consultations had shifted there. He left a letter, saying that he would be back in Chandigarh shortly after the Governor himself was due to return and that he expected to be able to announce the formation of his government at that time.

But the Governor D. C. Pavate, immediately upon his return installed the Lachhman Singh Gill (L. S. Gill) Ministry maintaining that he could not wait any longer for Gurnam Singh to form a government.

From the above, the inference is unavoidable that D.C. Pavate was told by the central government that he had badly missed the opportunity of Gill's defection—in not appointing him minority C. M. with the Congress support, on the West Bengal pattern. Presumably he was advised to use his discretion in favour of Gill without any further delay, going back on his pending invitation to Gurnam Singh. In fact, in less than 72 hours between the resignation of Gurnam Singh and the induction of Gill, the Governor lost his patience. Moreover, there had been no constitutional breakdown as the caretaker government was legally functioning during this period. A few hours more would have posed no threat to the constitution or democracy.

The action of the Governor was widely criticised in press. *The Century* (Weekly) observed :

“Is this the discretion we expect of our Governors? Shri Pavate who is a former Vice-Chancellor would for sure have taken serious taken against the Registrar in his University if the latter had first offered an appointment to some junior lecturer, and before hearing from that appointee within a reasonable period, gone on to appoint somebody else in his place. Shri Pavate should have judge his own performance by the same standards of fair play and equity. Whatever might be said of power-loving bureaucrats and politicians, surely our academicians should be prepared to leave Governor's House, if their conscience and innate sense of objectivity are subordinated to the indignity and the so-called “discretion” of the gubernatorial office, in which trips to Delhi and telephone connections appear to play a decisive role.”<sup>7</sup>

Still another opportunity to the Governor to play role in this connection was provided by the situation created by defeat of Gurnam

7. *The Century* (Weekly), December 9, 1967, p. 5.

Singh's government on its budget proposals on March 23, 1970. Immediately after the defeat, the Governor asked the C. M. to resign, which he did after some reluctance on the morning of March 26, 1970.<sup>8</sup> Soon after submitting the resignation, the out-going C.M. again staked his claim to form the government. He claimed the support of 54 members in the 104 member House.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Parkash Singh Badal (P. S. Badal), the newly elected leader of the ALP in place of Gurnam Singh, claimed the support of equal number of members, i.e., 54.<sup>10</sup> Thus, each of the two rival claimants to power told the Governor that he enjoyed the support of 54 members in the 104 member House. It is thus clear that there were some common names on both sides and the Governor had to screen them. There being hardly any margin between the number of the two groups, much was to depend on the Governor's own judgement as to which of the two leaders had a better chance of forming a stable government. Each side hoped that once it got the Governor's invitation its ranks would swell with defectors from other parties and Independents. The Governor after considering the claims and counter-claims of the two leaders found that P. S. Badal enjoyed the support of more members than Gurnam Singh. So, he was invited on 26th March to form the government.

The action of the Governor evoked a mixed reaction among the political parties in the state. While all the non-Congress parties generally supported the Governor's action, the Gurnam Singh group of Akalis and the Congress leaders in the state showed their resentment over his decision. While Gurnam Singh criticised the Governor for showing much haste to form the Badal Ministry,<sup>11</sup> the leaders of Congress Party in Punjab went to the extent of approaching the P.M. and the President of the party for recall of the Governor.<sup>12</sup>

#### Appointment of Ministers

Constitutionally the Ministers should be appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister.<sup>13</sup> It implies that they cannot be appointed without the recommendation of the C.M., and that the Governor on his own cannot appoint any Minister. It may, however,

8. See, *The Statesman*, March 27, 1970.

9. *Ibid.*, March 28, 1970.

10. *Ibid.*

11. See, *The Tribune*, March 28, 1970.

12. For details see, *The Statesman*, March 30, 1970.

13. See, Article 164 (1).

be asked in this connection as to how far will it be possible for the Governor to refuse to administer oath of office and secrecy under Article 164 (3) to a person recommended by the C. M. Before 1967, when the Congress was ruling at the Centre as well as in the state there was not even a single instance in the state where the Governor had refused to administer the oath to a person recommended by the C. M. for appointment to the Council of Ministers. But after 1967 it happened twice. Firstly, when L. S. Gill wanted to take back a Minister, who had resigned on December 26, 1967 on the demand of the opposition, after his physical involvement with the students at Ferozepur.<sup>14</sup> The Governor refused to administer him the oath and explained to the C. M. that in view of his (the C. M.) earlier assurance to the Assembly that he would take action against the Minister for his involvement in the law and order case at Ferozepur, he could not possibly appoint him again at least until the Assembly met.

Secondly, when some of the Sant Akali M.L.As. defected to Gurnam Singh group of Akali Dal and thereby reduced the strength of the ruling party to 51, i. e., two short of an absolute majority, the C. M. wanted to appoint one or two Ministers but the Governor did not accept the proposal.<sup>15</sup> He gave two reasons for this ; (1) The name of the proposed Ministers were not revealed to him and (2) The Chief Minister had already lost his majority.<sup>16</sup>

The above instances indicate that during coalition government on certain occasions the Governor did not allow the C.M. to take persons of his choice in the Council of Minister. Also, he did not allow the C. M. to expand the Ministry as and whenever he liked. Both these steps were gross violation of the norms of parliamentary democracy.

#### Summoning the State Legislature

Whatever the relevant provisions of the constitution in this regard may say,<sup>17</sup> the convention of Parliamentary democracy is that the Governor summons the legislature on the advice of the C. M. This

14. For more details see, D.C. Pavate, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

15. See, *The Tribune*, July 2, 1970.

16. See, Pavate, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-63.

17. The relevant article 174 (1) says, "The Governor shall from time to time summon the house or each house of the legislature of the state to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit, but six months shall not intervene between its last sitting in one session and the date appointed for the first sitting in the next session."

practice was followed upto 1967. But during coalition government (1967—1971) the practice could not be strictly adhered to because in those days of political instability whenever a C. M. lost the majority support either due to defection by some of his supporters or due to the withdrawal of support by some of the constituent partner of the coalition, he was tempted to stay on in power and indulged in horse trading to regain the majority support. If a C.M. happened to lose the majority soon after the prerogation of the Assembly he could continue in office for nearly six months, because Article (1) stipulated that six months should not intervene between the last sitting of the Assembly in one session and the date fixed for first sitting in the next session. In order to stop the C.M. from doing so, the Governors, in certain cases, asked him to convene the Assembly soon to find out whether or not he enjoyed its confidence. Such type of situation developed in Punjab on two occasions.

For the first time the need to ask the C.M. to summon early session of the Assembly by the Governor was felt when on April 5, the amendment on the Governor's Address moved by the Congress opposition was passed by 53 to 49 votes. Soon after the defeat of the ministry, a deputation of the Punjab Congress Legislature Party met the Governor and demanded the removal of the Ministry, because as it said, "the Ministry has no constitutional sanction behind it after yesterday's defeat in the Assembly."<sup>18</sup> Giani Zail Singh, the then President of the PPCC urged the Governor to remove the Gurnam Singh Ministry because it was illegal and unconstitutional, having been defeated in the Assembly.<sup>19</sup> The Governor, Dharam Vira, after examining all the implications of the defeat, asked the Speaker of the Assembly to re-convene it as early as possible in consultation with the C.M. to enable the government and the opposition to measure their respective strength in the Assembly on the floor of the House.<sup>20</sup> In fact, this was the only right course for the Governor in the prevailing situation.

For the second time such type of situation developed in the state in July 1970. With the withdrawal of Jana Sangh's support on June 30 and the subsequent defections, the majority of the Badal Govern-

18. *The Tribune*, April 17, 1967.

19. *Ibid.*, April 18, 1967.

20. *Indian Express*, April 12, 1967.



ment became doubtful. In this situation, the Governor D.C. Pavate, asked the C.M. to summon the Assembly 'as early as possible' to demonstrate his claim that he still enjoyed majority support. Initially, the C.M. was reluctant. But later, he agreed to summon it on July 24.<sup>21</sup> It may be mentioned here that like West Bengal<sup>22</sup>, if the C.M. had resisted the Governor's demand for an early session it could presumably lead to dismissal of the Ministry and suspension or dissolution of the Assembly. Writing about Badal's decision to convene the Assembly, *The Statesman* in its editorial observed :

"Belatedly and somewhat gracefully Mr. Parkash Singh Badal has agreed to have his claim that he continues to enjoy majority support, in spite of the break-up of the Akali Jana Sangh coalition, tested by an early vote in the Punjab Assembly. Until late on Wednesday night he persisted in his earlier stand that he would not convene the Assembly before September when it must meet in any case because of the constitutional provision of six months as the maximum interval between the end of one session and the beginning of the next; he abandoned it only when the possibility of President's rule started turning into a certainty. He is not entitled to make a virtue of necessity, but it is a small mercy that the crisis created by his refusal to summon an early session of the legislative Assembly, in spite of majority being questioned has been solved through persuasion rather than through the exercise of Governor's debatable discretionary power.<sup>23</sup>

The discussion under this heading shows that during the period of coalition governments in the state, the situation developed twice on different occasions when the opposition conveyed to the Governor that since the incumbent, C. M. had lost majority in the Assembly, his ministry should be immediately dismissed. On both these occasions the Governor asked the concerned C.M. to call an early session of the Assembly to prove whether he actually enjoyed majority or not. For the sake of comparison, it may be mentioned here that

21. *Ibid.*, July 4, 1970.

22. In West Bengal, when the Chief Minister Ajoy Mukerjee did not agree to convene the Assembly before 23rd November 1967 he was dismissed from office. For details see *The Tribune*.

23. *The Statesman*, July 4, 1970.

during Congress governments in the state there was not even a single instance when the Governor had asked the C. M. to convene early session.

#### Proroguing the Assembly

Ordinarily the Governor prorogues the Assembly after it has been adjourned *sine die* by the Speaker. But it does not mean that it can not be prorogued when the Assembly has merely been adjourned instead of being adjourned *sine die*. Such a situation developed in Punjab when the Speaker Joginder Singh Mann adjourned the Assembly on March 7, 1968 for a period of two months<sup>24</sup> during the Budget session. The adjournment of the Assembly in March meant that the budget could not be passed and then the problem was as to what could be done. To tackle this problem the Governor prorogued the Assembly on March 11, 1968 under Article 174 (2) of the Constitution<sup>25</sup> and re-summoned it. The action of the Governor was highly criticised by the opposition.<sup>26</sup> Some of them even went to the court to sue him. The High Court gave judgement in favour of the opposition.<sup>27</sup> But later this prorogation was held valid by the Supreme Court.<sup>28</sup> It means that the Governor can prorogue it not only when it has been adjourned *sine die* but also when it has been merely adjourned.

#### Dissolution of the Assembly

Keeping in view the conventions of parliamentary government, which we have adopted in the states, it has become a common practice in the federation units of India that if the C.M. having solid majority in the Assembly advises the Governor for the dissolution of the State Assembly he would ordinarily accept his advice. But, when, he has a dangerously narrow and shaky or a doubtful majority, the Governor may or may not dissolve the Assembly on his recommendation. The latter type of situation developed in Punjab thrice during the period of coalition governments in the state.

In the first case, after the defection of a large number of MLAs

24. For details see *Ibid.*, March 8, 1968.

25. See, *The Patriot*, March 13, 1968.

26. See, D.C. Pavate, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

27. For details of the judgement see *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

28. For details of the case State of Punjab Vs Sat Pal, see *All India Reporter*, 1969, Supreme Court, p. 902.

in November 1967 from the United Front, Gurnam Singh (the C.M.) tendered the resignation of his ministry and advised the Governor to dissolve the Assembly and hold fresh elections to obtain a clear verdict from the electorate.<sup>29</sup> But the Governor refused to abide by the advice of the outgoing C. M. and appointed an alternative government under the Chief Ministership of L.S. Gill.

For his action, the Governor was severely criticised by the press as well as the leaders of the opposition. Critical newspaper editorials, letters from readers and personal attacks on the Governor were normal features in the last week of November and the first week of December. Their main plea was that since the C.M. had not been defeated on the plea of the house, but had resigned by himself, the Governor should have accepted his advice to dissolve the Assembly and hold fresh elections. One of the significant points raised by Gurnam Singh in this connection was that both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister had expressed the view at the time of the crisis in the Madhya Pradesh in August 1967 that the Governor was bound to accept the advice of even the defeated C.M.

However, it may be mentioned here that in the debate on Madhya Pradesh in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha the opposition parties, including the Jana Sangh, had generally taken the view that the Governor could, and in fact should, refuse dissolution if it was possible to form an alternative Government.<sup>30</sup> Therefore it may be mentioned here that the parties forming the United Front were saying one thing in Parliament and quite the opposite when it affected their own interest. In fact, political parties in our country are inclined to interpret the provision of the Constitution to suit their own interests at any given time without any consistency.

In the second case, after the defeat of his Government on the budget proposals, in March 1970 the C.M. Gurnam Singh advised the Governor to dissolve the Assembly and recommend President's Rule followed by fresh elections.<sup>31</sup> The Governor, however, rejected the advice and stuck to the position taken by him earlier in 1967 i.e. to explore the possibilities of an alternative Government. Accordingly, Badal (the leader of the Akali Party elected in place of Gurnam Singh) was invited to form the Government on March 27, 1970.

29. See, D. C. Pavate, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

In the third case, fearing the defection of some MLAs, Badal, the then C.M. advised the Governor on June 13, 1971 to dissolve the Assembly. The main reason he gave in support of his point of view was that "there was a marked tendency on the part of the members of the Assembly to defect without qualms."<sup>32</sup> The Governor accepted the advice of the C.M. knowing fullywell that he had lost the confidence of the House. Giving justification of the acceptance of C.M.'s advice, Pavate (the Governor) has written in his book : "I could not refuse to accept the Chief Minister's advice to dissolve the House, especially when he advanced good reasons for this and had not been defeated in the house at the time he advised me to dissolve it."<sup>33</sup> In this context J.R. Siwach writes : "It seems strange that the Governor of Punjab dissolved the Assembly on the advice of the Chief Minister who had lost the majority so that the game of defections and counter-defections may stop but the Governor of Haryana, in more or less similar circumstances, instead of accepting the advice of the out-going C.M. Rao Birendra Singh, particularly when he had a majority, recommended President's Rule."<sup>34</sup> Hence it appears that the proper course of action for the Governor of Punjab would have been that instead of dissolving the Assembly in haste, he should have first explored the possibilities of an alternative Ministry. It is worthwhile to mention here that Gurnam Singh with the support of the Congress was prepared to form an alternative Ministry.<sup>35</sup>

The action of the Governor was severely criticised by the Gurnam Singh group of Akalis and the Congress, who were the only sufferers in this case. *The Tribune* observed that this was the first time since independence that the ruling party had virtually censored for acted in an unconstitutional manner. His action was called improper, unconstitutional and arbitrary. It was alleged that he was in league with the Sant Akali Dal and that is why he acted in haste.<sup>36</sup> Commending upon the action of the Governor, *The Times of India*

32. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

33. See, J.R. Siwach, *The Office of the Governor : A Critical Study* (1950-73), New Delhi, 1977, pp. 170-71.

34. See, *Ibid.*, p. 171.

35. *The Tribune*, June 16, 1971.

36. See, *Ibid.*, June 14, 1971.

observed :

In dissolving the Punjab Assembly the State Governor Dr Pavate, has done the right thing but, unfortunately, in a wrong way. According to his notification, he acted on the advice of the Chief Minister, Mr. Parkash Singh Badal, whose resignation he accepted simultaneously. But he should have known that having lost his majority in the Legislature, which was due to meet in less than 24 hours, Mr. Badal had neither a legal nor a moral right to advise the Governor on dissolution or any other matter... Nothing would have been lost if instead of acting in haste, Dr Pavate had merely accepted Mr. Badal's resignation and ordered an adjournment, rather than dissolution of the Assembly. This would have given him enough time to examine Mr. Gurnam Singh's claim to form a Ministry and recommend to the centre on his own, that a fresh election, preceded by a spell of President's rule would be the best way out of the latest crisis in Punjab politics."<sup>37</sup>

The discussion on the point reveals that taking advantage of the political situation created by shifting loyalties of the legislators during the coalitional politics in the state, the Governor (Pavate) fully utilised his discretion concerning dissolution of the Assembly. In the first two cases, he declined to accept the advice of the C.M. (Gurnam Singh) to dissolve the Assembly on the plea that he would explore the possibilities of forming an alternative government. But the same Governor in the third case of such a nature accepted the advice of the C.M. (Badal) without exploring such possibilities and knowing fully well that he had already lost the majority support in the Assembly and that Gurnam Singh (leader of the rival Akali Dal and former C.M.) was ready to form the alternative government with the support of Congress Party.

#### Issuing Ordinances

Though constitutionally it depends upon the personal satisfaction of the Governor to issue an Ordinance whenever the need arises, but it is a convention of the parliamentary government that they are issued by the Governor whenever the Chief Minister asks for it. So long as the same party was at the helm of affairs in the state as well as at the centre, this convention was followed strictly.

37. *Times of India*, June 14, 1971.

But some deviation to this principle was witnessed during coalitional politics in the state. On June 15, 1970 the Badal Government sent the Governor the State Legislature (Prevention of Disqualification) Amendment Ordinance, 1970, for his approval. It sought to remove the disqualifications attached to an MLA on being appointed a member or Chairman of the Corporate bodies. The Governor, instead of issuing an Ordinance, referred it to the Home Ministry in order to know whether it is constitutionally proper for him to issue such an ordinance because in his opinion, it amounted to a corrupt practice.<sup>38</sup> The issue assumed public importance in the state. Mohinder Singh, General Secretary of the Congress (O) criticised the State Governor for referring to the Home Ministry the proposed ordinance. He said that the advice of the council of Ministers was binding on the Governor and his action was violative of the Constitution. He stated that the "Governor should have referred the proposed Ordinance to the State's Advocate General for legal opinion and not to the Union Home Ministry. The Governor has violated Article 213 of the Constitution by practically transferring his legislative power to the Union Home Ministry."<sup>39</sup> Moreover, not only Gurnam Singh but also the leaders of the Congress Legislature Party, the Jana Sangh and the CPI wrote to the Governor strongly protesting against the proposed ordinance.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, almost all the newspapers had brought out various aspects of it. *The Tribune* in its leading article of June 8, appealed to the Governor to satisfy himself, as the watchdog of political morality, before issuing the Ordinance and not, act merely as a lapdog of the Home Ministry.

The controversy subsided when Pavate succeeded in persuading the Chief Minister not to pursue the idea any more.

It will not be out of place to mention here that the matter had assumed importance because the Governor of Haryana had issued similar Ordinance in identical circumstances only a few days earlier, removing the disqualifications of the members of the assembly incurred by becoming Chairman or Directors of Corporations. It may also be mentioned here that the successor of Pavate, M M. Chaudhry issued the same type of ordinance in 1973, when there was

38. See, *The Tribune*, June 18, 1970.

39. *Ibid.*

40. For details of the letter written to the Governor D. C. Pavate in this regard see, Pavate, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-55.

a Congress Government headed by Zail Singh in the state.<sup>41</sup>

#### Reading The Address

During the period of Congress dominance, not even on single occasion did the Address attract any public attention, but during the period of coalition politics it remained one of the most debated issues. In March 1969, the Governor of Punjab was criticised by L.S. Gill and the Congress Party for not refusing to read out the so-called critical portions of the address to joint session of the state legislature on March 14, 1969. Captain Rattan Singh, Deputy Leader of the Congress Legislature Party, demanded his recall as in his opinion he was "lacking in self-respect and had read the Address without giving it proper thought."<sup>42</sup> D.D. Khanna, Chairman of the Legislative Council observed :

The Governor has condemned himself by reading certain passage of his address to the joint session of the State Legislature.<sup>43</sup>

The portion ran as under :

"The Budget session of the Legislative Assembly in March 1968, constitutes an unfortunate and painful Chapter in the history of the democracy in the country; police were brought into the sacred floor of the Punjab State Legislative Assembly and Constitutional rights and practices were gravely violated during the so-called passage of the annual budget. Supplementary on estimates amounting to Rs.18,36,30,690 and 51 demands for grants and appropriation amounting to Rs. 2,87,70,93,070 included in the budget for the year 1968-69 were declared to have been passed in a matter of minutes. My Government is of the definite view that these violations of sacred principles and practices pose a great threat to democracy. We are determined to have this incident enquired into at the highest level so as to take necessary steps for the future."<sup>44</sup>

The main reason for this extra-ordinary criticism of the Governor on the issue was that the Governor of West-Bengal (Dharam Vira) had skipped two paragraphs from the address prepared for him

41. See, *The Tribune*, June 13, 1973.

42. See, *Ibid.*, March 18, 1969.

43. *Ibid.*

44. See, *The Statesman*, March 15, 1969.

by the new United Front Ministry there only a week earlier. Pavate justified his action on the grounds : (1) The facts of the case in Punjab were quite different from those in West Bengal. While in West Bengal, there was a direct attack on the Governor, Dharam Vira and the Congress Party, in the Punjab address a reference had been made only to this action of the Gill Ministry for which by no stretch of imagination the Governor or the Union Government was responsible; (2) Gurnam Singh had resigned and had not been dismissed as was the case in West Bengal; (3) In Punjab the address merely stated a fact and did not question the legality or the propriety of the Governor's acceptance of the budget proposals; (4) The matter had already been approved by the Supreme Court and the new Government could not possibly have objected to it; and (5) The main leaders of the opposition parties, Gurnam Singh (Akali Dal Gurnam Singh group) and the President of the PPCC, Zail Singh, were shown the text of the address in advance. They did not point out any such thing at that time.<sup>45</sup>

Besides this, even if the case is analysed on the criterion of the principles of parliamentary democracy and the provisions of the Indian Constitution it will be found that the Governor was duty bound to read the address as prepared by the Council of Ministers.<sup>46</sup> He could not delete or skip, any of its portion. Therefore, the Governor of Punjab did the right thing when he refused to skip, a portion in address under the pressure from Opposition parties. Appreciating the action of the Governor *The Tribune* in its editorial observed :

Happily there was no skip and jump on the opening day of Punjab Legislature's budget session. So, Governor Pavate's address came straight from the shoulder missing no words and conveying the United Front Ministry's comments and programmes precisely as it was meant to be conveyed through the Constitutional medium.<sup>47</sup>

### III

The above discussion clearly indicates that the change in the political atmosphere of the state due to the defeat of Congress Party

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-01.

46. See, M. S. Dahiya, *Office of the Governor in India*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 172-73.

47. See, *The Tribune*, March 17, 1969.



in 1967 elections and the consequent formation of coalition governments by the opposition parties in the state greatly affected the working of the Governor. Under the changed circumstances the Governors began to play a much bigger role in the state. During this period (1967-71) the office became both prominent as well as controversial. This was due to the fact that under the changed political context, the Governor no longer remained confined to mere ceremonial functions. Because of the neck to neck fight between the Congress and the non-Congress parties in which the floating loyalties of the legislators played an important role, there arose several changes in which the Governor was called upon to act as an umpire by acting in his discretion. Whenever he used his discretion in any case he was criticised by one or the other side for acting in favour of a particular party or parties.

Secondly, the discussion regarding the functioning of Governor under coalition governments in the State indicate that while using their discretionary powers the Governors of different States did not act uniformly under similar situations. Not only this, even the same Governor of a particular state acted differently on different occasions under nearly similar situations. Additionally, it is also clear from the analysis of the functioning of Governor in the state that on many occasions he acted according to the dictates of his political masters at the centre. The Central government used the Governor to beat the opposition parties in the state for its own political aggrandisement. As a consequence of this, misuse of the office by the centre, the opposition parties began to raise the demand either for "issuing guidelines to the Governors for the use of their discretionary powers" or the abolition of the office itself.

Thirdly, it may further be observed that while it is undisputed that under the one-party governments the position of the Governor remained generally weak, in the coalition governments his position need not be strong under all type of coalitional set-ups. It has been found that the Governor has a fair chances to be in a strong position in the coalition where the difference in the numerical strength of the ruling parties vis-a-vis the opposition in the Assembly is very small, the number of political parties forming the coalition is large, the sense of opportunism prevails among the legislators, their loyalties are very weak, and the ruling party at the centre is different from that of ruling parties in the state. It is evident from the working of the

office of Governor under the two Akali-led coalition governments in the state between 1967-71. On the contrary, the Governor has been found to be in a weak position in the coalition governments where the difference in the numerical strength of the ruling parties vis-a-vis the opposition in the legislature is large, the number of political parties forming the coalition is small, the loyalties of the legislators towards their respective political parties are strong and the political complexion of the state government is not different from that of central government. The argument can be supported with the experience of the working of office of the Governor under Akali-Janta coalition government (1977-79). During this period the office of the Governor remained as weak and neglected as it used to be during the one-party dominance of Congress in the pre-1967-period.

## Historical Analysis of Gian Singh's Twarikh Guru Khalsa

SUKHDIAL SINGH\*

*Twarikh Guru Khalsa* is Giani Gian Singh's very first work written in Punjabi prose describing the history of the Sikh Gurus. It was first published by Munshi Rajinder Singh in lithograph in Guru Gobind Singh Press, Sialkot in Samvat 1948 BK (A.D.1891). After the death of Giani Gian Singh it was published a number of times by different agencies and those editions are undated. The Languages Department of Punjab, Patiala, got it republished in 1970. It is to be noted that during the life of Giani Gian Singh it was published in lithograph only in 1891. All the latter editions published by different agencies in type editions do not tally with the first edition of 1891 and this study has based on the first lithograph edition. Lithograph copies of *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* are available in different libraries and one such copy is lying in the library of the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.<sup>1</sup>

Giani Gian Singh, the author of *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, introduces the subject with illustrations in sixteen pages and states that the preliminary Sikh writings do not strictly adhere to what is known as history. He has given a detailed bibliography of books which have been made the basis of the book.<sup>2</sup> This include Gurmukhi writings written before his work. Besides, he has also referred certain published works in Persian and English scripts. Moreover, it goes to the credit of Giani Gian Singh that he has been able to contact old men of his time from whom he has been able to induce history in

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1. See, also Giani Kirpal Singh (ed.), *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, Vol. I, Amritsar, 1977, pp. 137-46.

2. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* (Lithograph first edition), Sialkot, 1891 (Samvat 1948 B.K.), p. 7.

the form of oral traditions. He has also been assisted in this task by his own grandmother. He has quoted a number of individuals from whom he has induced historical evidence. To quote the author :

Besides a number of general books and those of history, I have been able to contact old men for a period of fifteen/sixteen years and gathered together historical information in the form of tell-tales.<sup>3</sup>

The book under study deals with the biographical sketches of all the Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. Though the author has substantiated the material in hand from historical angle yet there are certain elements which suggest that tradition and myth have reigned supreme in *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*. It will be quite in the fitness of things to divide the whole material of the book into two parts namely mythical or unhistorical and historical events for our convenience and better understanding.

By giving mythological references Giani Gian Singh has toed the old line of tradition and history has frequently been mixed with mythology. Albeit, historical facts have to be segregated from the mythological references in order to cope up with the present day research methodology. We may cite some instances where he has intermingled historical facts with mythological references. For instance, the author has depicted Guru Nanak Dev as the incarnation of Vishnu and the *Mul Mantra*<sup>4</sup> as His utterance. He has gone to the extent of explaining the wearing of two swords of *miri* and *piri* by Guru Hargobind for shielding the four vedas etc. etc. All these and many more such references found in *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* may safely be called mythological references since those are not historical facts and go contrary to the Sikh doctrines. The dictionary meaning of the word 'myth' is "a commonly held belief that is untrue or without foundation on ancient traditional story of Gods."<sup>5</sup> According to Collingwood, "Myth is not concerned with human actions at all. The human element has been completely purged away and the divine actions that are recorded are not dated events in the past, indeed, but in a dateless past which is so remote that nobody

3. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

4. The *Mul Mantra* is : *Ek Onkar Satnam Karta Purakh nirbhau nirvair Akal Murat ajuni Sai bhang gurparshad.* *Ibid* , p. 63.

5. *Chamber's 20th Century Dictionary*, New Delhi, 1985, p. 838.

knows when it was."<sup>6</sup> McLeod describing myth writes "... a myth is a construct of human imagination, developing out of an actual situation and seeking to give meaning to that situation."<sup>7</sup> Thus, the mythological references given by Gian Singh, should be considered in the light of these statements. The only significant way to introduce mythological elements in history is to colour it with miraculous tell-tales and Gian Singh makes use of this device while explaining historical events. The point is elaborated here. The author states that Guru Nanak, instead of learning the three R's from the Pandit, taught him certain new and noble things. Moreover the covering of the body of sleeping Nanak by the shadow of the hood of the serpent, the cooling of the burning cauldron of one Kanda Rakshash with the touch of the finger, to have an access to the court of the Almighty after reaching the Sumer Mountain<sup>8</sup> etc. etc., give the impression that all these anecdotes are connected with mythological world in one way or the other.

Gian Singh has gone to the extent of gathering together mythical accounts about the construction of Sikh Temple and other plans envisaged by the Sikh Gurus. He writes that a disciple of Raja Janak of *tretayug* appeared when the present site of Santokh Sar at Amritsar was being dug out by Guru Arjun Dev. The said *bhagta* or the saint talked to the Guru about his own times. Again, he states that Guru Amar Das was so much agonized on the weeping and wailing of the lady whose son had died that he made a prophesy that from henceforth no child would die at Goindwal. The author argues that no child expired at Goindwal so far as Guru Amar Das lived.<sup>9</sup> These statements and many more of the like give a mythical touch to his *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*. His motive in indulging in such writings seems to be to uphold the Sikh Guruship.

Traditional references found in *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* are quite in the line with the early Sikh writings. As a matter of fact, most of the works of Sikh writers, written before Gian Singh, pertain to this oral tradition. The writings of Kesar Singh Chhibber,<sup>10</sup> Sarup Das

6. R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, London, 1973, p. 15.

7. W.H. McLeod, *Early Sikh Tradition*, Oxford, 1980, p. 9.

8. *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, pp. 53, 56, 58, 59, 85, 86 and 305 and *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, pp. 36, 40 and 105.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 184 and 196.

10. 'Bansawalinama Dassaen Patshahian Ka' (MS, No. 5290), Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar, Samvat 1908 B.K. (A.D. 1851).

Bhalla<sup>11</sup> and Rattan Singh Bhangu are no exceptions. Almost all the *Janamsakhis* depict the influence of oral tradition and as such *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* acknowledges the influence of such traditions. Nevertheless, Gian Singh depends so much on the oral traditions that he does not seem to have scrutinized the prevailing traditions of his time. A few instances would suffice here. The author holds Chandu Shah responsible for the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev.<sup>12</sup> But this statement of Gian Singh is not correct because it is clear from the contemporary evidence like *Tuzk-i-Jhangiri* that Guru Arjan Dev was tortured to death by Jahangir's religious intolerance. According to the autobiography of Emperor Jahangir, the Guru was put to death owing to religious cause :

In Goindwal, which is situated on the bank of the river Biah (Beas), there lived a Hindu, named Arjun in the garb of *Pir* and *Shaikh*, so much so that having captivated many simple hearted Hindus, nay even foolish and stupid Muslims, by his ways and manners, he had noised himself about as a religious and worldly leader. They called him Guru, and from all directions fools and fool worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations they had kept this shop warm. For years the thought had been presenting itself to me that either I should put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, in the light of this contemporary evidence, Gian Singh's statement that Chandu Shah was the main person responsible for the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev is, of course, doubtful and historically incorrect. Again, Gian Singh considers Chandu Shah mainly responsible for the detention of Guru Har Gobind in the fort of

11. *Mehma Parkash*, Part II (1776). Languages Department Punjab, Patiala, 1971 (reprint).

12. *Prachin Panth Parkash* (ed. by Bhai Vir Singh), Amritsar, 1962.

13. *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, pp. 211-14.

14. *Tuzk-i-Jahangiri*, Lucknow (n.d.), p. 35. See also Ganda Singh (ed.), *Makhiz-i-Twarikh-i-Sikhan*, Amritsar, 1949, pp. 35-43; Ganda Singh (ed.), *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, Calcutta, 1962, p. 46; Ganda Singh, *Sikh Itihas Bare*, Lahore, 1942, pp. 7-10; Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, pp. 34-35; A.C. Banerjee, *Guru Nanak To Guru Gobind Singh*, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 125-27 and J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India : The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Cambridge, 1990, p. 63.

Gwalior and for the battles of the Mughal authorities with the Sikhs.<sup>15</sup> But the contemporary writings do not make any mention of Chandu Shah.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, Gian Singh's statement is not correct when he says that Chandu Shah was the main person who was responsible for the Guru's imprisonment and for the battle with the Mughal authorities.

Similarly, Gian Singh holds Dhir Mal and Ram Rai responsible for the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur.<sup>17</sup> But there is a strong evidence in the form of *Bachittar Natak* that Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life for the sake of *dharma*.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, we cannot rule out of the possibility of the commonly known episode in Sikh history that owing to the atrocities committed by the representatives of the Mughal Government, a deputation of Kashmiri Pandits met Guru Tegh Bahadur at Anandpur Sahib with the request to intervene in the matter which ultimately led to the martyrdom of the Guru.<sup>19</sup> Thus, it can be safely said that Gian Singh's statement is historically incorrect.

Gian Singh also refers to the torturing of *masands* to death by tenth Guru by putting them into the cauldrons full of boiling oil.<sup>20</sup> He also mentions the killing of the goats by Guru Gobind Singh on the eve of the selection of the five beloved ones.<sup>21</sup> Such statements of the author do not bear any authentic evidence and as such require

15. *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, pp. 219-20, 231-35 and *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, p. 92.

16. See for instance Jahangir's *Tuzk-i-Jahangiri*, pp. 235-36 and Zulfikar Ardistanti, 'Dabistan-i-Mazahib' in Ganda Singh (ed.), *Makhiz-i-Twarikh-i-Sikhan*, pp. 35-43.

17. *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, pp. 278-79 and *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, p. 114.

18. ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸਾਕਾ ਜਿਨ ਕੀਆ ।

ਸੀਸੁ ਦੀਆ ਪਰੁ ਸਿਰੁ ਨਾ ਦੀਆ ।

Guru Gobind Singh, 'Bachittar Natak' (an autobiography c. 1698), in *Das Granthi* published by S. G. P. C., Amritsar, 1978, p. 117.

19. See also Fauja Singh Gurbachan Singh Talib, Tirlochan Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur—Prophet and Martyr*, Delhi, 1967, pp. 286-87; Sarup Singh Kaushish's *Guru Kian Sakhian* (ed. Piara Singh Padam), Patiala, 1986, pp. 71-72; Ganda Singh's article 'The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Studied in Historical Setting' in *The Panjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, October, 1977, pp. 208-09; and Kapur Singh's article, 'Who killed Guru Tegh Bahadur?' in *Journal of Sikh Studies*, G. N. D. University, Amritsar, August, 1975, pp. 153-166.

20. *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* (Henceforth as *T. G. K.*), pp. 310-11 and *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, p. 173.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

a further probe. Moreover, such statements toe the line of his predecessor writings and he has simply followed the old line of action. We may further discuss this point at some length.

Gian Singh talks of the development of Sikhism side by side with the rise of the Mughal Empire. He states that Guru Nanak bestowed upon Babar, the first Mughal Emperor, blessings that his seven generations would enjoy sovereignty, in lieu of seven handfulls of *bhang*, an intoxicant presented to the former by the latter.<sup>23</sup> We may safely say that such unhistorical statements taken up by the author from his predecessor writers,<sup>24</sup> do not bear any weight or logic.

Gian Singh writes that Guru Angad Dev, the second Sikh Guru, invented the Gurmukhi alphabets.<sup>25</sup> This does not seem to be an historical fact as we know that Guru Nanak himself wrote *Asa Patti*<sup>26</sup> wherein he has used all the 35 letters. These also contain the letter 'r.' Thus, to say that Guru Angad Dev invented Gurmukhi alphabet is to deny the writing of Guru Nanak Dev himself. Later writers confirm that *lande-mahajni* script was used during the pontificate of Guru Angad Dev.<sup>27</sup> We may safely add that Guru Angad Dev modified the *lande-mahajni* script and not invented it. This new script came to be called Gurmukhi, meaning that it came from the mouth of the Guru.<sup>28</sup>

Gian Singh links up the historical event of the victory of Chittor by Emperor Akbar with the construction of *baoli* or oblong well by Guru Amar Das at Goindwal. He argues that Guru Amar Das categorically stated that Akbar would conquer the fort of Chittor Garh

22. See for instance Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* (1751, ed. by Shamsheer Singh Ashok), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, p. 128, and Sarup Das Bhalla, *op. cit.*, p. 804.

23. T. G. K., pp. 161-62 and *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, p. 49.

24. See for example Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-85.

25. T.G.K., p. 175 and *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, p. 57.

26. *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, *Rag Aasa, Patti*, pp. 432-34.

27. Cf. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. IX, p. 624; H.A. Rose (ed.), *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province* (1883), Vol. I, Languages Department, Punjab Patiala, 1970, p. 651 (fn.); M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, Vol. II, Oxford, 1909, p. 56; Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 19 (fn.) and G. S. Nayyar, *Sikh Polity and Political Institutions*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 43-44 (Introduction).

28. Cf. Indubhushan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1972, pp. 153-56 and H. R. Gupta, *History of Sikh Gurus*, New Delhi, 1973, p. 82.



if and only when he would assist the Guru and his Sikhs in the completion of the *baoli* at Goindwal. He further states that Emperor Akbar rendered all possible help to the Guru for the completion of the *baoli* and as a result therefore he was able to conquer Chittor by the blessing of the Guru.<sup>29</sup> We, as students of history, know that such like statements do not contain any logic. Moreover, the dates given by him regarding the construction and completion of the *baoli* at Goindwal and the conquest of the fort Chittor by Emperor Akbar are not convincing. The events of commencement of the construction of the *baoli* at Goindwal in 1557.<sup>30</sup> and its completion are held in the year 1559 whereas the fort of Chittor was conquered by Akbar in 1568.<sup>31</sup>

Gian Singh has taken up the issue of grant of some land as *jagir* by Emperor Akbar to Bibi Bhani, the daughter of Guru Amar Das. As regards the grant of *jagir* to Bibi Bhani, we may not delve on this issue in detail here but the year of this *jagir* in 1576 does not fit in historical chronology because we know that Akbar remained busy in quelling the revolt in Bengal in this year<sup>32</sup> and he was not present in the Punjab during this time.

We may cite another example of the wrong chronology given by Gian Singh. He states that the province of Punjab faced a serious famine in the year 1605 when Guru Arjun Dev suggested Emperor Akbar to remit the land tax that year so that the farmers might not face any difficulty.<sup>33</sup> We may again submit here that historical evidence

29. T.G.K., p. 181 and *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, p. 69.

30. T.G.K., p. 181; See also Sarup Das Bhalla, *op. cit.*, p. 170 (fn.); Dr Fauja Singh gives 1566-67 as the years of the construction of the *baoli* but he has not given any source of his information. See Fauja Singh, *Guru Amar Das—Life and Teachings*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 120; Gobind Singh Nirmal Udasi, *Itihas Guru Khalsa* (1925, ed. by Pirthipal Singh Kapoor), Amritsar, 1991, p. 97 and Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha's article, 'Itihas' in Karm Singh Historian (ed.), *Babu-Mule Itihasak Lekh*, Amritsar, 1963, p. 68.

31. Cf. V.A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Moghul 1542-1605*, Delhi, 1962, pp. 62-63. See also Wolsely Haig and Richard Burn (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1957, pp. 97-99 and Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *Akbar The Great*, Vol. I; 1542-1605, Agra, 1972, pp. 105-110.

32. V.A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-12; Muhammad Akbar, *The Punjab Under The Mughals*, Delhi, 1974, p. 55; Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 22 and Indubhushan Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 171 are silent about the year of Akbar's visit to the Guru at Goindwal. See also Madanjit Kaur, *The Golden Temple—Past and Present*, Amritsar, 1983, pp. 4-5.

33. T.G.K., p. 210.

does not indicate any famine in the Punjab in 1605. However, famine created disaster in 1595 for the inhabitants of Punjab who remained under its bad effects upto the years 1598-99. It may not be out of place to mention here that Akbar remained in Punjab from 1597 to November 1598.<sup>34</sup> Of course, there is a mention of Guru Arjun Dev's appeal to Emperor Akbar regarding the remittance of revenue in 1598 in some Persian sources which include Sujan Rai Bhandari's account.<sup>35</sup> But the year given by Gian Singh does not bear any historical testimony.

Gian Singh talks about the financial assistance of rupees fifteen thousand in cash provided by Guru Arjan Dev to Prince Khusrou on the eve of the latter's revolt against his father, Emperor Jahangir.<sup>36</sup> This statement again does not bear any historical evidence. Later research also does not support this point<sup>37</sup>

Gian Singh writes about keeping of seven canons and one thousand horseman by Guru Hargobind provided to him by Emperor Jahangir. The Guru is stated to be the chief Supervisor for the affairs of Punjab.<sup>38</sup> Such like statements have no authentic source and thus can easily be rejected. As a matter of fact, such references found in Gian Singh's account have marred the chief merits of this work.

Gian Singh states that Guru Har Rai, the Seventh Sikh Guru, faced the royal army on the bank of the Beas at Goindwal in support of Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb's army was compelled to retreat by the canon balls fired by the Sikhs.<sup>39</sup> This again is not an historical fact as we know that Aurangzeb's army crushed the forces of Dara Shikoh, in Punjab without any resistance.<sup>40</sup>

34. V.A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-93; Wolsely Haig and Richard Burn, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-44 and Muhammad Akbar, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

35. Sujan Rai Bhandari, *Khulasat-ut-Twarikh* (Pbi. tr.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 436. See also J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

36. *T.G.K.*, p. 211.

37. See for instance Ganda Singh, *Sikh Itihas Bare*, pp. 5-19; Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Indubhushan Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 2 and Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

38. *T.G.K.*, pp. 223-30.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

40. Saqi Mustaad Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* (Pbi. Tr. Darshan Singh Awara), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1977, pp. 7-8; Sujan Rai Bhandari, *op. cit.*, pp. 533-36; Muhammad Akbar, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-84. See also Karm Singh Historian's article, 'Sikh Itihas' in *Phulwari*, Amritsar, June, 1929, p. 640.

Thus, after discussing some of the unhistorical events narrated by Gian Singh in *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, we may take up at some length the material found in Gian Singh's account which is useful and authentic. Such like statements of Gian Singh have been quoted by the later writers in their writings and has proved as a reference source. As a matter of fact, Gian Singh is the first writer who has initiated the writing of Sikh history in historical perspective. Before him historical approach is not found in early Gurmukhi writings although episodes pertaining to the life of the Sikh Gurus are available in the form of tell-tales.

One of the Chief merits of Gian Singh's *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, is that he has given the years of the birth and demise of all the Sikh Gurus commencing from Guru Angad to Guru Gobind Singh. These years are in accordance with the chronology of events as they occurred and have been accepted by some earlier writers as well.<sup>41</sup> As such, the present work presents those years in corresponding Christian era. Those have mostly been accepted by the later writers.<sup>42</sup> In fact, Gian Singh traces the years of the lives of the Sikh Gurus giving the details of the early life, pontificate and later years of each and every Guru. It may be safely added here that he is the first to use Nanak Shahi Samvats along with those of Bikrami Samvats.

It goes to the credit of Gian Singh to help us in ascertaining years of certain important historical events. For instance, notwithstanding the wrong years of the creation of Khalsa given by most of the writers<sup>43</sup> before him, the author of *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* gives correct year of this significant event i.e. Samvat 1756 B. K. corresponding to A.D. 1699. This year corroborates with the chronology of events as they took place and has been quoted by the later writers with

41. Sarup Das Bhalla, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92, 305, 417, 537, 629, 649, 748; Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30 31, and Cunningham, *op. cit.*, pp. 44, 45, 50, 55, 56, 58.

42. Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 19, 24, 26, 36, 46, 47, 49, 50, 58, 59, 78; Indubhushan Banerjee, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 148, 165, 184, 187 and Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 81, 83, 108, 122, 129, 131, 132, 143, 236.

43. Koer Singh who is the nearest writer to Guru Gobind Singh's period, gives Samvat 1746 B.K. (A.D. 1689) *op. cit.*, p. 20; Kesar Singh Chhiber gives Samvat 1754 B.K. (A.D. 1697) *op. cit.*, charn, 10, Band 319. Rattan Singh Bhangu gives Samvat 1752 B.K. (A.D. 1695) *op. cit.*, p. 44; Sarup Das Bhalla and Sukha Singh are silent about it.

confidence.<sup>44</sup>

We may cite another instance. Gian Singh cites the month of Baisakh (April) as the month of the battle of Mukatsar, fought between Guru Gobind Singh and the army of the Governor of Sirhind.<sup>45</sup> Gurmukhi writings before him are either silent about the month of the battle of Mukatsar or give the month of Magh (January). But this does not seem to be an accurate month chiefly because it is very close to the incident of evacuation of the fortress of Chamkaur by Guru Gobind Singh and does not fit in the chronology of events. Further more, it seems quite impossible for the Sikhs of the Guru to have assembled together in a large number in a very short time after the evacuation of Chamkaur. Moreover the distance from Chamkaur to Mukatsar is a long one and is not supposed to have been covered within such a short time. Moreover, to organise his disciples for a fresh conflict was not possible within a limited time. A *hukamnama* pertaining to March 1706, issued by Guru Gobind Singh to the *Sangat* of Majha with instructions to visit the Guru with arms<sup>46</sup> very much suggests the possibility that the Guru was looking for the ensuing battle with the Governor of Sirhind which took place in April-May, 1706.<sup>47</sup>

Gian Singh gives us valuable information about the preparation of three copies of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* during the stay of Guru Gobind Singh at Damdama Sahib (Sabo Ki Talwandi).<sup>48</sup> It is helpful to us in forming an estimate of the copies prepared from the *Adi Granth* during the Guru period.

Gian Singh also throws a valuable light on the activities of Guru Gobind Singh after the despatch of *Zafarnama* by the Guru to Emperor Aurangzeb in the Deccan with instructions to one of his disciples Bhai Daya Singh to hand it over to the Emperor personally. Gian Singh adds that it was this *Zafarnama* in response to which the Emperor

44. Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Banerjee, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 113; J. S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 77 and *Essays in Sikh History*, GNDU, Amritsar, 1972, p. 59; J.S. Grewal and S.S. Bal, *Guru Gobind Singh : A Biographical Study*, Chandigarh, 1967, p. 121.

45. T.G.K., p. 339 and *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, p. 226.

46. *Hukamname* (ed. by Ganda Singh), Patiala, 1985, pp. 182-83.

47. In support of this conclusion, see also Devinder Kumar Verma's approved Ph. D. Thesis entitled 'Guru Gobind Singh In History', Deptt. of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, p. 166.

48. T.G.K., p. 342 and *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, pp. 232-33.

suggested the Guru in writing to see him in the Deccan for which the Guru was offered assistance.<sup>49</sup> Innayatulla Khan Ismi, the writer of *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*<sup>50</sup> and Kavi Sainapat of *Sri Guru Sobha*<sup>51</sup> also suggest the issue of such a *firman* by the Emperor.

Another new and useful feature of Gian Singh's *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* is that he is the first Sikh writer who has quoted Persian and English writings during his narration of events pertaining to the lives of Sikh Gurus. He has also introduced the technique of giving footnotes to authenticate the details given by him. All this goes a long way in giving historical touches to his writings.

In the light of the above we may safely say that Gian Singh's *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* contains numerous mythological, traditional and unhistorical references but the fact remains that this work is very informative and as such can be used as a reference book for a stipulated period. As a matter of fact, if we probe deeply into the period of the writings of Gian Singh, we come to know that the literary works pertaining to that period depict mythological and traditional inclinations. It was a period dominated by religious set up and as such education was imparted solely with the religious aim. Thus, the chief centres of education were abodes of the holy and Gian Singh was a product of this set up. As it is, the main stress was to highlight the qualities and achievements of the religious patrons and mythological and traditional elements naturally found place in such writings. That is the primary reason why Gian Singh applauded the Sikh Gurus in whom he had unshakable faith.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 343.

50. Cf. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Makhiz-i-Twarikh-i-Sikhan*, pp. 74-75.

51. Kavi Sainapat's *Sri Gur Sobha* (ed. by Akali Kaur Singh), Amritsar, 1925, p. 91; See also Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (Pbi. Translation by Janak Singh, MS.), preserved in the Library of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, file No. 534. folio 100 and J. S. Grewal, *Essays in Sikh History*, p. 64.

52. *T.G.K.*, p. 9.

## Sikhism as Envisaged by Guru Nanak Dev

DR GURBACHAN SINGH NAYYAR\*

Religion was a way of life with Guru Nanak, the doyen of the Bhakti Movement who laid considerable stress on the integration of human beings. He made his appearance when castes, creeds and disunity caused by diversity of faiths had become articles of belief with the contemporary Indian society. Guru Nanak Dev attempted to bring about order in this chaos. He enunciated logical and simple essentials for the attainment of self-realization and used a unique and pragmatic approach. He undertook extensive journeys in India and abroad lasting for a quarter of a century administering a healing touch to sick mankind. He proceeded on his holy tours known as *Udasis* in 1496. He established *sangats* or congregations of the Sikhs at numerous places he visited. Bhai Gurdas writes in this connection :

Centres of worship were established wherever Baba Nanak set foot. All the Sidh Centres in the world became centres of Guru Nanak's teachings. In every house a *dharmshala* was established and *kirtan* was held as if it were an unending Baisakhi festival :<sup>1</sup>

Network of *dharmshalas* sprang up for preaching the teachings of Guru Nanak and singing God's Name. Everybody, who wished to join the Sikh *sangat*, was welcomed because no distinction of caste was observed by Guru Nanak. He appointed certain notable disciples as head of the *sangats* established at different places. Bhai Lalo and Sheikh Sajjan were asked to preach Sikhism in the Western Punjab. Salis Rai was to look after the spiritual needs of the *sangat* at Patna. Whereas, Gopal Das in Benares, Budhan Shah in Kiratpur and Devlut in Tibet are some of the outstanding names in this context. The idea of *sangat* had its origin in *sadh sangat* or *sat sangat* meaning holy

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1. Bhai Gurdas, *Varan, pauri 27*.

assemblage. Guru Nanak explained *sat sangat* as 'an assembly where solely the Name of God is repeated.'<sup>2</sup> *Sat Sangat* was considered essential by Guru Nanak and the succeeding nine Gurus because of the fundamental reason that through this agency perfect union with the Lord can be attained. The holy compositions of the Sikh Gurus are full of stress on the *sangat*. Guru Nanak writes that one becomes holy in the company of the holy and thereby forsaking sins one runs after virtue.<sup>3</sup> *Sangat* came to hold a respectable and unique place in the Sikh religious order. Maubid Zulfiqar Ardistani writing in 1644 states that the number of Sikh followers went up gradually in the time of each Guru.<sup>4</sup>

Closely connected with the *sangat* was the *pangat* or the Sikh assembly dinning in rows in the community mess called *langar*. The practice of opening *langar* was started by Guru Nanak who served a group of hungry *sadhus* by offering them edibles and making them sit in rows. He incurred this expenditure out of a sum of rupees twenty handed over to him by his father, Mehta Kaluji for the purpose of making a good bargain.

Guru Nanak exhorted the *sangats* that they should make the service of humanity as a part and parcel of their lives and their kitchens were thus to be deemed as *Guru-ka-Langar*. In Guru's *langar* meals could be prepared and served by anyone irrespective of his caste to all who came to the Guru's presence. In this way, the bonds of caste were loosened. Irrespective of their caste or status, the followers of Guru Nanak ate the same food while sitting together in *pangats* or rows.

Guru Nanak asserted that the service of mankind is the best instrument for leading better life in the next world.<sup>5</sup> He taught that those who earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brows and share it with others are the people who follow the righteous path. The Guru's partaking of Bhai Lalo's bread rejecting the feast laid by Malik Bhago is well known.

As a matter of fact, Guru Nanak practised what he preached. As

2. *Adi Granth, Sri Rag Mohalla I*, p. 72.

3. *Ibid.*, *Asa Mohalla I*, p. 414.

4. 'Dabistan-i-Mazahib' published in *Makhiz-i-Tawarikh-i-Sikhan* (ed. by Ganda Singh) Sikh History Society Amritsar, 1949, p. 33.

5. *Adi Granth, Sri Rag Mohalla I*, p. 26.

6. Sujan Rai Bhandari, *Khualasat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 25.

mentioned above the first *pangat* recorded in history is that of Chuharkana where Guru Nanak himself served food to a group of needy saints when his father sent him out to engage in a profitable trade. Coming across hungry *sadhus* in the way he was moved by compassion and fed them being of the view that nothing could be better or *sacha sauda* or a true bargain. That place came to be known as *Sucha Sauda*. In the later years of his life, Guru Nanak fed the *sangats* regularly in *pangats* in the *langars* established at Sultanpur and Kartarpur. On Guru Nanak's bidding, persons like Sajjan Thug and Bhoomia decoit abandoned their evil ways, took to righteous living and in order to serve humanity distributed their belongings to the poor and the needy and served food in the *langar* in the Lord's Name. Similarly, Sivanabh the ruler of Ceylon set up *Guru Ka Langar* for all and sundry and cast aside his superstitions. The *pangat* system thus, went a long way in practically removing the bonds of caste system.

In order to preach Sikhism, Guru Nanak proceeded on his holy tours known as *Udasis*. He captivated people by reciting self-composed and spontaneous hymns in praise of the Almighty revealing the mysteries of the Universe. He visited southwest of Punjab accompanied by Mardana, a Muslim rebeckplayer of his native village. Bute Shah in his *Tarikh-i-Punjab* states that Bhai Balla also went along with the Guru on some of the travels. Guru Nanak showed his disapproval of Malik Bhago, a rich man of his own Kashatriya caste at Syedpur in Gujranwala by declining the invitation to stay with one who had enriched himself by unfair and foul means. The Guru took care and preferred to grace the modest residence of a faithful and sincere devotee named Bhai Lalo, a carpenter who earned his livelihood by the sweat of his brow. The Guru proved by action that honest living by low caste was more dignified than dishonest living by those of high origin. Moreover, the Guru emphasised that high and low positions are attained by actions and deeds. The Guru preached the dignity of labour. He considered honest and hard work as fundamental to the building of moral strength for his stress was on the paramouncy of the soul.

Guru Nanak had a debate with *yogis* of Achal Batala. Bhai Gurdas draws a pen picture of the encounter. Bhangar Nath Yogi curiously asked the Guru why he had endeavoured to mix vinger with milk. The implication was that the Guru had polluted the life of seclusion led previously by him by starting a household and taking up a worldly way of living. The pot containing milk of spirituality



had been spoiled and no butter—the gist of spirituality had come out of the churning. The Guru replied with confidence that God graced only clean hearts. The Guru added that the Yogi considered himself pious only by living the life of renunciation, forgetting that he had to depend on house-holders for his basic needs. The Guru condemned renunciation and the method of torturing the body. This implies that the holy body is the dwelling place of the Almighty which should be properly looked after.

Guru Nanak Dev paid a visit to Multan, the centre of Sufi saints. Four things namely dust, heat, beggars and grave-yards were prominent about Multan. The Guru spent a night at Talamba and reformed Sajjan, who pretended to be a holy man albeit, he was a tyrant-robber who waylaid the travellers or killed them after inviting them to spend the night at this place. The robber was reformed by the divine hymns sung by the Guru. Guru Nanak is said to have established the first *dharmshala* there and nominated Sajjan as a missionary.

Bhai Gurdas portrays how a brimming milk bowl was presented to the Guru by the Sufi saints of Multan. It indicated that Multan was already overcrowded by saints and stood in no more need of him. The Guru returned the bowl with a jasmine flower meaning thereby that he could also be accommodated there among the other saintly beings multiplying fragrance. Guru Nanak Dev also discussed spirituality with Sheikh Brahman, the head of the Sufi school at Pakpattan. The Guru also visited Dipalpur, Kanganpur and various other places propagating the message that God's Name is the cure for all the ills of humanity.

Guru Nanak's eastwards journey from 1497-1509 covered Kurukshetra, Delhi, Mathura, Agra, Hardwar, Ayodhya, Benares and his religious discourse there is well known. He visited Puri, Bhopal, Jhansi, Gwalior, Bharatpur, Rewari, Thanesar etc. on his way back. The *arti* performed by the people at Benares deserves special mention. The Guru opposed symbolic worship and remarked that the Almighty could not be installed in a particular place nor created. The Guru gave the demonstration of the right type of *arti*. He preferred *arti* in the lap of nature. The creation has a divine message. The Guru made the symbolic use of the firmament as *salvar*. The sun and the moon were the lamps. The galaxy of stars was compared to the pearls studded in the sky for the worship of the Divine Being...so on and so forth. All this was stated to elucidate the fundamental truth that an understanding of the

mysteries of nature and not the empty rituals could lead to God.

The next journey of the Guru which was southward lasted for about six years from 1510 to 1515 contacting people and making them understand the mysteries of nature by example and percept. The Guru seems to have covered Rajasthan, Kerla, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujrat, Sind and West Punjab. The Guru clarified to Shivrabh, the ruler of Cylone that human beings were bound by the law of Karma. Those performing noble deeds escaped transmigration of the soul and became immortal through worshipping His Name.

The Guru held religious discourse with Gorakh Nath and Machhendranath and clarified the issues raised by them during his journey to the north which spanned from 1515 to 1517. This time he visited Jwala Mukhi, Kangra, Kulu, Lahaul Spiti, Tibet, China, Garhwal and Sirmaur. The Guru is said to have suggested *Sehaj Yoga* for controlling the senses.

Guru Nanak paid a visit to Mecca and Medina besides other places of Muslim pilgrimage. Bhai Gurdas gives an elaborate picture of the activities of the Guru there. He was dressed in blue and carried a staff, an earthen jug and small carpet to sit on for reciting prayers. While sleeping with the feet towards Kabha, the holy shrine, the Guru is said to have aroused the anger of Rukin Din, the head priest who objected strongly to this sacrilege committed by the Guru. The Guru emphasised that God was omnipresent and graced all the four directions. He even suggested that his feet be turned in the direction where there was no God. The Guru's dynamic philosophy appealed to the people.

Guru Nanak met people of different creeds at various places in Baghdad, Iran, Afghanistan, Kandhar and Kabul during 1520-21. He directed the people to always remember the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. On his return to the Punjab he stayed at Hasan Abdal where he enlightened one Wali Gandhari, an egoist, hailing from Qandhar but who had settled down at Hasan Abdal. The Guru was of the view that suffering was inevitable because God was forsaken for sensual pleasures; righteousness had vanished and falsehood prevailed. The Guru had his own unique, simple and direct method of generating ideas in others. He devoted the best part of his life to the pragmatic approach to the faith. He struggled hard to create harmony between Hinduism and Islam. Many from all castes and creeds became his followers. The author of *Khulast-ut-*

*Tawarikh* written in 1698 states :

If a man comes at the dead of night and utters the name of Baba Nanak, though he may be a stranger to all or even a thief or a wayfarer or a man of doubtful character, he is always welcomed as a brother and as such served forthwith.

The above statement is in itself an evidence how Guru Nanak's name became a watchword among the masses.

## The Sikh-Afghan Relations (1818-1837) : Evidence in Charles Masson's Account

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Around 1818, the affairs of Afghanistan had become very complicated. To sustain the Afghan monarchy, under the pressure of attacks from the east and the west, an utmost energy was needed. Fateh Khan Barakzai was put to death. With his death the fragile constitution of the Afghan monarchy began to crumble. There was chaos at Kabul. At this critical moment in the Afghan politics, Mohammed Azim Khan decided to remain quite in Kashmir. Dost Mohammed Khan condemned his line of policy and urged him to 'contest the lands of their fathers.' In response to this, Azim Khan gave two lacs of rupees in cash and bills for twice the amount along-with few troops to lead an expedition against Kamran, the murderer of the Wazir-Fateh Khan.<sup>1</sup>

Intelligence of the possession of Kabul by Dost Mohammed Khan disturbed Mohammed Azim Khan. For, Dost Mohammed, if confirmed in the possession of the capital, might have reduced Azim Khan in Kashmir to the status of a vessel. Consequently, he decided to march toward Kabul. Knowing the intention of Azim Khan, Dost Mohammed did not assume kingship himself and declared Shahzada Sultan Ali as a king. However, on his arrival at Kabul, Mohammed Azim Khan was acknowledged as Wazir and Ayub Shah as a nominal sovereign. The entire country was partitioned amongst the brothers. Except Dost Mohammed all of them were satisfied. Now it was their common interest to repel foreign invasion and to preserve family status quo.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Charles Masson, *Narrative of various Journeys in Beluchistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab, including his residence in those countries from 1826 to 1838*, Richard Bentley, London, 1842, Vol. III, pp. 34-35, 39-40.

2. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 47, 48, 52.

Encouraged by the political chaos at Kabul, Maharaja Ranjit Singh reduced Peshawar to tributary state in 1818. Taking advantages of Azim Khan's absence from Kashmir, it was annexed to the Sikh kingdom in 1819.<sup>3</sup> Alarmed by these agressions, Mohammed Azim Khan led an expedition against the Sikhs. To arouse the fanatic population and to draw out their gallant hands to co-operate in the great fight for the faith; agents were despatched into the hilly regions north of the course of Kabul river.<sup>4</sup>

Maharaja Ranjit Singh prepared himself with no less vigour for the impending struggle. Being aware of the weaknesses of the Afghan chiefs, the Maharaja first resorted to artifice. Through his agents, he told the chiefs of Peshawar that 'they had an opportunity of experiencing the favour and liberty of the Sirkar, and of securing the possessions of their territories in absolute independence. It was not asked in return that they should betray their elder brother, but they should be so contrived that he should quietly return to Kabul.'<sup>5</sup> The Peshawar chiefs felt it to be in their interest to confirm themselves in power. They listened complacently to Ranjit Singh's overtures and clandestinely entered into communication with the Maharaja.<sup>6</sup>

By this time Mohammed Azim Khan had reached Peshawar. On his way from Kabul, he deposited his treasure at Minchini. However, at Peshawar, Jai Singh went to the side of the Sikhs. Through Yar Mohammed, Dost Mohammed Khan expressed his desire to join the Sikhs.<sup>7</sup>

Ranjit Singh crossed the Indus. He found Mohammed Azim Khan encamped at Nushera. Negotiations followed: Yar Mohammed Khan was the diplomatist for Azim Khan. He knew well that the security of treasure was a great concern of Mohammed Azim Khan. Therefore, through a delusive letter informed him that, 'it was contemplated to seize his treasure at Minchini.' Meanwhile, a sharp action had taken place on the opposite side of the river, between a portion of the Sikh troops and the levies of the Yusaf Zai districts. Ranjit Singh was in person at the contest. Though, it was pretended that he crossed the river on an hunting expedition and accident brought about the conflict. Yet the fact of his having passed, the

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 65.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

5. *Ibid.*, III, p. 57.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Indus, seemed to countenance the report of design upon Minchini and the treasure. In sore uneasiness of mind, Mohammed Azim Khan wept, tore his beard and inveighed against the treason of his brethren. He foresaw the disgrace of retiring without struggle from the field ; nor could he enduce reflection that his wives and treasure should fall into the hands of Ranjit Singh. Undertermined, whether to stand his ground or to retreat his indecision was communicated to his army. The infection spread and augmented itself into a panic.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the whole camp was in movement. Next morning the Afghan army no longer existed. Picking up his harem and wealth at Minchini, Mohammed Azim Khan crossed the Momand hill and regained the valley of Jelalabad. However, Ranjit Singh dismissed Yar Mohammed Khan to join his fugitive brothers.<sup>9</sup> The Maharaja marched on to Peshawar, but so excited was the public feeling throughout the country, that he did not think it prudent to retain it. Yar Mohammed Khan and Dost Mohammed Khan were privately sent for. They were rewarded their treason to their brother by dividing the chiefship of Peshawar equally between them, very expertly placing Dost Mohammed Khan in an antagonist position to the brothers of Yar Mohammed Khan and thereby providing for support of strife and dissensions amongst them.<sup>10</sup>

Dysentery carried Mohammed Azim Khan to the grave. He may be truly said to have died broken-hearted. However, he implored his son, Habibulah to wipe out the disgrace he had suffered from the Sikhs.<sup>11</sup>

After the death of Mohammed Azim Khan, the rulers of Kabul were too much occupied with their own problems to mind the affairs of the Sikhs. The rulers of Peshawar continued to pay tribute to the Maharaja till it was finally annexed in 1834. However, the peace in this region was disturbed by Saiyad Ahmed Shah, 'a deadly enemy of the Sikhs'. He is said to have a good number of Kyberies around him. They were being paid in Company's rupee.<sup>12</sup> His declaration was suitable enough to draw attention of various tribes against Ranjit

8. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 14, 143 & 165.

Singh.<sup>13</sup> Within a very short period, he was able to arouse the fanatic Muhammeden population and gather around him a considerable mass of them.<sup>14</sup>

Intending to commence his operation by capturing Attock, a key to the Punjab the Saiyad marched to Peshawar. With their troops and guns, the rulers of Peshawar joined him. Due to the 'presumed favour of heaven' and the number of troops around him, no one doubted his success. Further more, a distribution of the Sikh towns and villages was effected. The Saiyad was in such a high spirit that he 'considered himself the master of Peshawar, and the Sirdars as his vassals'. This made the ruler of Peshawar suspicious.<sup>15</sup>

Hari Singh Nalwa, at the head of thirty thousand men, was ready to keep the Afghans off from crossing the Indus, until the Maharaja should arrive from Lahore with a large army, including all his regular. One half of Hari Singh's force crossed the Indus under Budh Singh's command and threw field-work near Saiyadwala.<sup>16</sup>

The Saiyed took position at Saiyadwala and surrounded Budh Singh's force within the field-work. After spending some days in great distress, Budh Singh opened dialogue with the chiefs of Peshawar. The arguments of Budh Singh had a good effect on them.<sup>17</sup> However, on the morning of the battle those who, with their cavalry and guns, were stationed in front, at once passed to the rear. Yar Mohammed Khan started shouting 'Shikas! Shikas!' (defeat; defeat!). Budh Singh with his three guns charged the Afghan host. The resistance was very slight. Each Sikh claimed to have slain fifteen to twenty Afghans that day. The boastful Saiyad became insensible and was nearly captured in the village Saiyadwala, but for his Hindustani followers, who prevented the accident and gave time to his elephant to swim across the river.<sup>18</sup>

13. Saiyad Ahmed gave out that he had a divine commission to take possession of the Punjab, Hindustan and China. He swore that he would compel Ranjit Singh to turn Mussulman or cut off his head. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 132-33.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

17. Budh Singh assured the chiefs of Peshawar that 'if they took no part against him in action, he would excuse their conduct in having joined the Saiyad to Ranjit Singh'. He also reminded them about the immense army on the road under 'the order of the Sirkar'; telling them that 'the Sirkar was Zurawar'. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-34.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

The Maharaja, however, confirmed the Peshawar chiefs in their possessions. But he increased the amount of tribute to be paid in horses, swords, jewels and the celebrated *Bara* rice. Also, the son of Yar Muhammed Khan was made hostage.<sup>19</sup> After his signal defeat by the Sikhs, the Saiyad being no longer able to attempt anything against them, directed his hostilities against the ruler of Peshawar. He denounced them as infidels and as the traitors to the cause of Islam. He conferred upon Yar Mohammed the name of Yaru Singh'.<sup>20</sup> Yar Mohammed Khan was slain in a surprise attack by the Saiyad. But the city was saved due to General Ventura's timely presence, who was at Peshawar to secure a horse named *Lilli* for the Maharaja.<sup>21</sup>

The Saiyad made another serious attack on Peshawar. With the help of Faizulah Khan, a powerful *zimindar* of Peshawar, he was successful in occupying it. The chiefs of Peshawar retired to Khyker. The Saiyad opened negotiation with them. They readily agreed to any terms proposed, having no intention of fulfilling them. The chiefs agreed to give one lac of rupees to the Saiyad: to respect Faizulah Khan including all those who had sided with the Saiyad; assured their assistance in the future struggle with Sikhs. With this arrangement, the chief of Peshawar returned to the city. After few days, they slew Faizullah Khan and Saiyad's agents. On their request, the Sikh forces crossed the Indus. Sporadic skirmishes drove the Saiyad within the limits of the Yusafzai districts. Later on he was killed in a scuffle at Balkot in 1831.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the rulers of Peshawar, from its conquest in 1818 till its annexation to the Sikh Kingdom in 1834, were practically speaking, the vassals of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They were allowed to retain their territory on payment of tribute and placing their sons as hostages in the court of the Maharaja. They were impatient under his yoke, but every manifestation of countumacy only tended to confirm their subjection and to aggravate uneasiness inflicted upon them.<sup>23</sup>

The way, in which the Maharaja annexed Peshawar in 1834, was quite ridiculous to Masson. Hari Singh Nalwa at the head of nine thousand men demanded annual tribute from the chiefs of

19. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 137

22. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 79-80.

23. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 132.



Peshawar as usual. On its receipt, he showed dissatisfaction, rejecting horses as unsuitable.<sup>24</sup> A message was sent to the chiefs, that Shahzada Naunihal Singh desired to see the city. It would be well if they should evacuate it and retire to Bagh Ali Mirdan Khan. When the Shahzada would ride round it the army would retire toward Attock.<sup>25</sup> Being aware of the actual intentions of Hari Singh, the chiefs of Peshawar sent their families to Minchiri with their guns and other property. They themselves remained in Peshawar, with the horses ready to be saddled at a moment's notice. One morning Sultan Mohammed Khan, who had always his spy-glass in his hands, saw the Sikh force in motion. All became panic struck. The horses were saddled and mounted instantly. The city was evacuated in a trice. The Sikhs moved in a very respectable style. In the van was the young Shahzada on an elephant, with Hari Singh and several other chiefs attended by a host of cavalry. Behind them followed the battalion of M. Court, advancing in columns at a brisk pace. The resistance was very minor. The Sikhs having completed the circuit of the city, encamped under the Balla Hissar to the east. The discomfited chiefs retired to Takkal and then to Shekhan, at the skirts of the hills.<sup>26</sup>

Sultan Mohammed Khan fled to Kabul. He was received courteously by Dost Mohammed Khan. A crusade against the Sikhs was immediately proclaimed. Letters were despatched to Ranjit Singh, calling upon him to give up Peshawar to Sultan Mohammed Khan. Dost Mohammed Khan assumed the dignity of 'Padshah'. His action was justified by the Mullahs; they said that 'he merely revived the pretensions and claims of Barakzai family, as set forth by his ancestors'.<sup>27</sup> For the collection of war funds, Dost Mohammed applied very harsh means. But these too were justified by the Mullahs.<sup>28</sup> However, an extraordinary collections to the amount of nearly five lacs of rupees was made through various sources. Three lacs of rupees were put into the field funds while two lacs were kept

24. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 224, 228-29.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 226-27.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 224-25, 227-28.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 266-67, 305, 309-10.

28. With respect to the Hindus, the Mulla's discovered a 'Sacred text admirably adopted to their case, as well as to the circumstances of the Amir. It set forth that it was lawful to seize the wealth of infidels, provided the wealth so seized was employed in repelling the aggressions of infidels'. *Ibid.*, p. 311.

for unavoidable expenses.<sup>29</sup>

Towards the end of February 1835, Dost Mohammed followed the troops already despatched to Jelalabad. On the 3rd of March, Hazi Khan left the Balla Hissar to join the Amir. From the very core of heart, the Amir did not want to measure sword with the Sikh ruler. Therefore, he sought mediation of the British Indian Government. Having its own political plus-minus calculation, the British Indian Government delayed answer to his overture. In his anxiety, the Amir deputed Mohammed Hussain Khan, to the Shah of Persia, with a letter asking for help.<sup>30</sup> On the 5th of March, Dost Mohammed Khan reached Bassowal. He lingered on, awaiting possibly some overture from the Sikhs. The festival of *Id Karban* was celebrated. Prayers were offered for the success in the impending conflict. Exclaiming audibly, the Amir said that, 'he might be heard by those around, that he was a weak fly, about the encounter a huge elephant; that if it pleased God to grant him victory'.<sup>31</sup>

At Bassowal, Dost Mohammed Khan received a fabricated letter from Sultan Mohammed. It surprized the Afghan camp and gave joy to the Amir. Apart from confirming the arrival of Mr. Harlan, it revealed that Harlan had been put to death and his property was made booty. But soon afterward it became known to the Amir that Mr. Harlan's reception was most flattering and Sultan Mohammed had fell in with the Sikh views. This obliged the Amir to Ask Pir Mohammed Khan to renew his oath of fidelity.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, Nawab Jabar Khan and Sultan Mohammed Khan arrived at Daka alongwith Mr. Harlan. Mr. Harlan sent copy of the Koran to the Amir and made many promises. Desertion of several petty chiefs of Peshawar, in the defiles of Khyber, to the Sikh camp too provided relief to the Amir. However, Mr. Harlan was permitted to pass over the Sikh Camp. The Amir with his host encamped at Shekhan.<sup>33</sup>

Hearing that the Afghans had actually taken up position at Shekhan, Ranjit Singh accelerated his movements. Peremptory orders were despatched to his Sardars at Peshawar to avoid a general action and wait his arrival. Consequently, to amuse the Amir, the Sikhs

29. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 328-33.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 335-36.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 338-39.

renewed negotiations until the Maharaja's arrival. On the part of the Afghans, Nawab Jabar Khan and Aga Hussain were diplomatists. Claiming his complete ascendancy over the Amir, Aga Hussain received three thousands rupees from the Sikhs and promised to prevail upon the Amir to return to Kabul. A truce was agreed upon, however, through the instrumentality of Sultan Mohammed Khan.<sup>34</sup>

At this stage, a conflict arose over the issue of the retention of Peshawar, between the Amir and Sultan Mohammed Khan, after it was wrested from the Sikhs. Sultan Mohammed Khan asked the Amir to affix his seal to a bond assuring the cession of Peshawar to him. The Amir declined such assurance. Then Sultan Mohammed Khan demanded the promise of Jalalabad, which was alike denied. Without hope, therefore, from the justice or generosity of his brother, he considered himself free to further his own interests in any mode and in any quarter. The very presence of Sultan Mohammed Khan in the Sikh camp made the Amir conscious of his evil intention. In spite of the existing truce, the Amir secretly encouraged the Ghazis to attack the Sikhs, hoping thereby to endanger Sultan Mohammed Khan.<sup>35</sup>

Pir Mohammed Khan warned the Amir against such steps, but it did not produce any good results. However, the Afghan camp was further divided on the issue of battle with the Sikhs.<sup>36</sup>

These developments were yet to take final shape, when Ranjit Singh joined the Sikh camp. His very presence diffused confidence among his troops and unanimity amongst his sardars. Battle strategy was planned. Sultan Mohammed Khan, Fakir Azizuddin and Mr. Harlan were deputed to the Amir's camp. They were instructed to prevail upon him to retire and bring Sultan Mohammed Khan back with them.<sup>37</sup>

When the envoys were urging their suit, the Sikh forces surrounded the Afghans camp. Now Dost Mohammed Khan had

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 338-39.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 339.

36. Mirza Shami Khan supported by the Amir's eldest son, Muhammed Afzil Khan, Hari Khan and several other chiefs constantly advocated battle. While, Nawab Jabar Khan and his party insisted that it was useless to contend against the superiority of the Sikhs, and the Amir, whatever his boast, showed that he felt the same. *Ibid.*, pp. 340-41.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 341-42.

left with one of the two alternatives; to fight or to retire without loss of time. For a moment he was confounded. He could clearly see the failure of his enterprise. His vigorous antagonist had determined to bring matter to a prompt issue. To engage had, perhaps, never been his purpose, he was conscious of his inferiority. Though in despair, he reviewed his position once again and 'at once determined to retire while the opportunity permitted.'<sup>38</sup> In his dilemma, he consulted his confidential minister Mirza Shami Khan and others. The Mirza suggested the detention of Fakir Azizuddin and Mr. Harlan. It was conceived that the Maharaja could scarcely exist without the Fakir, who officiated as his physician, prepared his drams and was absolutely necessary to him. The amir hoped that through this measures, the Maharaja could be induced to exchange Peshawar for the indispensable Fakir. If no so, at least would be obliged to give a fair sum of money as ransom.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, he was aware of a degree of odium attached to his act. Therefore, he decided to criminate Sultan Mohammed Khan. He was sent for the Amir 'exchanging oath on the Koran' expressed his wishes that as the envoys came to the camp in his company, so he should carry them off, until the terms were settled with the Sikhs.<sup>40</sup> However, Sultan Mohammed had discerned Amir's object and 'took all the oaths on the Koran required of him, considering them, made under such circumstances as invalid'. The Amir summoned the envoys to his presence using foul language hand them over to the charge of Sultan Mohammed Khan.<sup>41</sup> The Sultan saw an opportunity of recommending himself to the favour of the Maharaja. He escorted the envoys to their own camp and having placed them beyond danger, retired to Minchini to wait the decision of the Maharaja.<sup>42</sup>

The Amir affected his retreat in the evening. It had become dark when he reached the heights of Ghagri within the Khyker hills. At

38. *Ibid.*, p. 342.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 342-43.

40. The Sikh envoys had proposed that the Amir should retire and half of the territory should be restored to Sultan Mohammed Khan. In response to this, the Amir put forward his proposals. He represented that he had been put to great expense in putting forth the expedition and it would only be considerable to give him a few lacs of rupees by way of *nallbandi*, to pay the charges of shoeing horses. Also, he had not come to make war with the Maharaja, whom he revered as a father, but to make peace. *Ibid.*, p. 345.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 343-44.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 344-45.

Ghagri his ears were assailed by the reports of the Sikh salvos, discharged at his flight, just made known to them. He turned round and looking towards Peshawar, altered an obscene oath and said, 'Ah ! you kafirs, I have taken you in !, refering to the capture of the Fakir and Mr. Harlan, who, as he supposed were in custody of Sultan Mohammed Khan in the rear'. He could not materialize his anxiety to preserve the entire army, so that he might boast of having retreated with honour. Eventually, he reached Kabul privately by night in utter disgust.<sup>43</sup> He had engaged himself, without allies or resources, in a struggle to which he was unequal and the consequences of his failure proved a fertile source of subsequent embarrassment to him.<sup>44</sup>

Sultan Mohammed Khan was duly rewarded for his treacherous role. The territory of Hashtnagar and the Doab, north of the river Kabul, with the southern districts of Kohat and Hangu were given to him by the Maharaja. Thus the Maharaja could boast of having fulfilled his arrangements with the Amir.<sup>45</sup>

The year 1836 passed without any significant occurrence. But, the commencement of the year 1837 was distinguished by active preparations on the part of Dost Mohammed Khan to resent the occupation of a petty castle at Jamrud by a Sikh general—Hari Singh Nalwa. This action of the Sikhs was interpreted as a prelude to further aggression. The Amir saw, in the intimidation and submission of the people of Khyber, the road laid open to Jalalabad. Yet, he did not want to have actual collision with the Sikhs. But, at the time, he judged it necessary to make a display of force. First step in this direction was to secure the Khybris, endangered by the proximity of the Sikhs. Mirza Shami Khan was provided with sufficient funds and instructions, to arrange the payment of annual allowances to their chiefs. If possible, it was also determined, to erect a castle and to establish a garrison at Khyber. Hazi Khan, alongwith the Bajor and Momand levies, was despatched to invade the districts of Doab and Hashtnagar.<sup>46</sup>

Being prudent, on this occasion, the Amir himself remained at Kabul. Instead, Mirza Shami Khan, his confidential minister, was

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 344-47.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 348.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 367.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 381-83.

deputed to superintend the operation. Muhammed Akbar, the son of the Amir, was commanding the troops. Besides, five of his sons, alongwith high military chiefs were also present with the army.<sup>47</sup> Mirza Shami Khan with the Amir's sons advanced to the castle of Jamrud. Non-appearance of Hari Singh Nalwa at Jamrud made them bold. A cannonade, was commenced upon its faces. In the course of two or three days, the weak defences of the castle were destroyed. The Afghans were congratulating themselves on its being about to fall into their hands.<sup>48</sup>

On the morning of 30th April, Hari Singh attacked the Afghan positions and for the moment carried all before him. In the melee, the Sikhs captured fourteen of the Afghan guns. The Sikhs supposing the victory gained, committed themselves in pursuit. They were met by a large body of horse under Shamsuddin Khan, who was on his way to the field. Many of the troops who had fled without combat also returned with him. Consequently, the Sikhs became fugitive. A small party of Sikh horsemen galloped over an eminence into the hollow, where Mohammed Akbar Khan was stationed. Muhammed Akram Khan also joined him. Both of them making one hundred men repulsed the Sikh party. At the same time another combined efforts of Nawab Jabar Khan, Sujah Daulah Khan and Shamsuddin Khan resulted in recapturing couple of guns from the Sikh forces. Mohammed Akbar Khan, who detested both, Nawab Jabar Khan and Sujah Daulah Khan, hastily came and struck a spear into the ground, thereby attributing to himself the merits of the affairs.<sup>49</sup>

At this critical moment, Hari Singh Nalwa received a fatal wound and was carried off the field. The Sikhs retired under the walls of Jamrud and entrenched themselves. Elated at the sudden and happy change, Mohammed Akbar Khan, proposed to march upon Peshawar. However, Mirza Shami Khan suggested the boastful young man to be satisfied with what was done.<sup>50</sup>

47. Amongst the Amir's sons were Muhammed Afzal Khan, Muhammed Akbar Khan, Muhammed Azim Khan, Muhammed Haider Khan and Muhammed Akram Khan. With them were Nawab Jabar Khan, Muhammed Osman Khan, Shujah Dowlah Khan, Shamsuddin Khan, Naib Mulla Momind Khan, Muhammed Hussien Khan, Arz Begi, Terin Khan and Nazir Dilawar. *Ibid.*, pp. 382-83.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 384.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 384-86.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 386.

Soon, a powerful reinforcement compelled the Afghan forces to retire precipitately, which was effected by night. Before retiring, Mohammed Akbar addressed a letter to the Maharaja explaining his position.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, he was given a royal reception on his arrival at Kabul.<sup>52</sup>

As a result of the struggle, the Afghans recovered eleven of the fourteen guns captured from them. They also claimed of possessing with themselves of three belonging to the Sikhs. The Sikhs, in like manner carried off the same number belonging to the Afghans.<sup>53</sup> The Afghans had really not much to boast off in this action, although, Mohammed Akbar plumed himself on a transcendent victory. On the other hand, the Sikhs scarcely acknowledged defeat, though their loss in the person of their chief was irreparable.<sup>54</sup>

In retrospect, Masson has devoted a sizeable portion to the Sikh-Afghan problem in his printed works. It appears from his treatment of the problem that Peshawar remained the most important issue in the Sikh-Afghan relations since its conquest by the Maharaja. In his pages the Sikh appears to be all powerful throughout the period. The ascendancy of the Maharaja over the Afghans has been attributed to the factionalism among the Afghans, their meager resources, power and shrewdness of the Maharaja. His account of the vents prior to 1820 is extremely sketchy and factually inaccurate. Moreover, Masson is habitually inaccurate about dates and gives very few in the printed account of his travels. But these shortcomings do not diminish the importance of his work. Nevertheless, from the year 1818 when a powerful Wazir Fateh Khan was removed from the scene, till 1837, when the final action was fought out at Jamrud, Masson's

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51. Mohammed Akbar's letter informed the Maharaja that 'they knew Hari Singh occupied the castle of Jamrud without his orders, therefore they did not mean to make war upon the Maharaja, when they marched to Jamrud. Hari Singh was their only enemy. They would have been satisfied with the demolition of the obnoxious castle, but the Sirdar attacked them, and of the consequences the Maharaja was aware. The moment they heard the arrival of Shahzada Noh Nihal Singh, they retired; as with reference to the chances of war, exemplified in the fate of Hari Singh, it would have been considered a great misfortune that a similar accident should befall a prince so dear to the Maharaja. *Ibid.*, p. 394.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 396.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 386-87.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 387.

account is very regular, vivid and graphic. His account of the Sikh-Afghan relation is that of eye witness' account, for most of the events happened during his stay at Kabul. In spite of all its ifs and buts, for the historian he is the best authority for the politics of Afghanistan during ten years prior to the First Afghan War and also of the Sikh-Afghan relations during this phase.<sup>55</sup>

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55. *Catalogue of the European MSS, India Office Library and Records, Vol. II, Pt. II, pp. 1273, 1281.*



## The background of the development of tenancy cultivation of a Punjab district under British rule--Ferozepore (1849-1914) a case study

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Tenancy cultivation often suggests the concentration of land into the hands of those who could not cultivate their lands on their own account and gave them on rent. It is widely believed that cultivation on share cropping or tenancy was the result of commercialization in agriculture. In Bengal, the cultivation on share-cropping evolved out, as Professor B. B. Chowdhury points out, of the growing pressure of population, limited availability of land and loss of land to money-lenders. He observes, "while the increasing population pressure in the context of the limited availability of land had thus much to do with the growth of the *barga* system there is no doubt that the system notably increased in these regions where peasants had been losing their lands to money lenders and other groups."<sup>1</sup> The agrarian structure in Punjab was not the same as in Bengal. It was not dominated by a limited group of rentier proprietors on a large estate over a mass of landless peasants. It had two special features. First, Punjab was a land of small peasant proprietors who cultivated their small holding with their family labours. There was hardly any development of sub-tenurial rights over land. Second, tenants were not always landless, they were heterogeneous in character. Some of them were the owners of small pieces of lands while others belonged to the rank of *kamin*. For a better understanding of the development of tenancy cultivation in Ferozepore under British rule this paper is

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1. B. B. Chowdhury, "The Processes of Depeasantisation in Bengal and Bihar 1885-1947", *I.H.R.*, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 149.

subdivided into two parts :

- (a) the relation between the proprietors and their tenants, and the question of rent and
- (b) the reasons for the spread of tenancy cultivation.

**Relation between the Proprietors and their Tenants and the question of rent**

Prior to British annexation, in Ferozepore, the relation between the proprietors and the tenants was based on ties of kinship and numerous customary obligations. Since land was abundant and communal bondage reigned supreme, the relationship did not undergo any serious challenge. Though the power of eviction resided in the hands of proprietors, there was hardly any case of eviction. But since the time of the first regular settlement (1853-1855) the relationship began to change with the extension of cultivation and the increase of the value of land added complications to it. During first regular settlement the distinction was made between the proprietary cultivators and the non-proprietary cultivators. Those cultivators who were subordinate either to the whole village or to the particular proprietor and usually paid rent in kind were recorded as proprietary cultivators and the original founders of the village did not object to granting proprietary right to them and they had been enjoying certain distinct rights.<sup>2</sup> But in the case of many other cultivators, the original founders raised objection to granting rights because of their servile position. They, it was argued, had no voice in the village council and "were always denominated 'Asamees' or 'Sarnewars' by which their subordinate position was clearly indicated."<sup>3</sup>

While protecting the rights of the 'privileged' cultivators, the British granted the right of occupancy to those who (a) could prove undisturbed possession of land for 12 years before British rule and (b) where it was found that they paid their dues along the proprietors (30 percent *Jama*).<sup>4</sup> The Tenancy Act 1868 guaranteed the right of these tenants on the payment of rent which was proportionately below the marked rates.<sup>5</sup> It also permitted the landlord to enhance the rents of occupancy the prescribed amount below the market rates at intervals of five years in lieu of previously existing law under which

2. *Ferozepore S. R.*, 1859, p. 74.

3. *Ibid.*,

4. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

5. Punjab Tenancy Act, 1868, Chapter-III, Clause-10.

rates were fixed for currency of settlement. It was further stated in the Act of 1887 that the tenants were bound to pay the amount fixed at the time of settlement whether they cultivated or not. The tenure was transferable and heritable but not terminable. He could not be ejected just because the owner wanted land for himself, he could only be ousted by the issue of a regular revenue suit.<sup>6</sup>

In Ferozepore either these tenants had family relationship or they were the menials. In Moga, most of the tenants 'got their footing in their village by reasons of their being the relatives of some of the proprietors' wives'.<sup>7</sup> In Ferozepore tahsil occupancy tenants were the menials or people brought in originally by land owners.<sup>8</sup> Tenants enjoyed certain privileges in the district. It was found that in many villages of Moga though the tenants could not be recorded as owners because they were not considered to have the power of alienation, yet they were practically in a better position than some classes of proprietors. They had an advantage over inferior proprietors for they paid no *malikana* and they had a right which is not possessed by limited proprietors (*malikana kabza*) for they were not entitled to a share in *shamilat* or common land.<sup>9</sup> In Zira also the occupancy tenants in 50 villages in the *rohi* and 90 villages in the *bet* paid the Government revenue and cesses at the same rate as that of the owners.<sup>10</sup> Tenants who paid only revenue mostly direct into the hands of *lambardar* were popularly known as *malik maurusi* and were exempted from enhancement under the Chief Court ruling.<sup>11</sup>

Rothermond in his study on peasant economy made a distinction between occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will and commented occupancy tenant under British rule formed the privileged upper strata of rural society while tenants-at-will constituted the lowest strata.<sup>12</sup> It appears from his analysis that occupancy tenant and tenants-at-will formed different social groups but it was not so if the formation of tenants-at-will and occupancy tenants in Ferozepur was

6. Tenancy Right in Punjab - *Selections from the Records of the Office of the Financial Commission* (Lahore, 1889), p. 10.

7. *Moga A. R.*, 1887, pp. 52-53.

8. *Ferozepore A. R.*, 1912, p. 21.

9. *Moga A. R.* 1857, p. 53.

10. *Zira A. R.*, 1888, p. 35.

11. *Moga, A. R.*, 1887, p. 53.

12. Rothermond's view is quoted in N. Bhattacharya, "Agrarian Change in Punjab 1880-1940", Unpublished thesis in S.N.U. 1985, p. 195.

looked at. A significant number of tenants-at-will was represented by persons who were either proprietors or occupancy tenants of other lands in the village.<sup>13</sup> The tenants-at-will and occupancy tenants were so intermixed which sometimes became a problem for many proprietors. In Fazilka it was the great difficulty caused by the intermixture of land held in occupancy tenants and as tenants-at-will by one man in the same field.<sup>14</sup> In the enjoyment of rights there was a great restriction. The tenure of the tenants-at-will "is neither heritable transferable nor it be subleased; he may associate another with himself but the party will have no rights or responsibilities by law."<sup>15</sup>

With the increase of the value of land the relationship between the proprietor and the tenant began to deteriorate. In the 1877-78 the Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepur reported that enhancement suits were on the increase and were specially numerous in the Moga tahsil where land was comparatively valuable. He reported that the landlords had begun to learn the significance of their legal powers.<sup>16</sup> In every settlement each body (landlord and tenant) tried to place himself in what it considered best protection for himself and tried to diminish the status of the other. "There is not a good feeling generally between occupancy tenants and their proprietors. Each regards the others' rights as something taken away from his own. The latter regret that they accorded the tenants any privilege at all at the time of settlement and the other side regret that they did not make more effort to get themselves put down as proprietors."<sup>17</sup> At the time of the settlement British granted the occupancy rights to all the tenants if they had cultivated any piece of land for more than 12 years and so the landlord tried to disrupt the uninterrupted use of lands by the tenants and a threat of eviction persisted at the time of reassessment. "The death of childless tenant is keenly watched for and a suit generally follows regarding the succession."<sup>18</sup> It was observed in the Revenue Report of 1904-05 that in Ferozepore district

13. *Moga A. R.*, 1887, p. 54.

14. *Ferozepore S. R.*, 1910-14, p. 18.

15. 'Tenancy right in the Punjab', Selections from the records of the office of the Financial Commission, Punjab (Lahore, 1889), p. 10.

16. *R. R.*, 1877-78, p. 15.

17. *Moga, A. R.*, 1887, pp. 53-54.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

ejectment proceedings were seldom due merely to the non-payment of rent, but rather to the fear entertained principally by landlords that long occupation might be used as a ground for claiming occupancy rights.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the money lender's attempt since the passing of the Land Alienation Act of 1900 to appropriate tenancy rights further complicated the situation. It was reported that money lenders began to acquire occupancy rights in large areas owing to the transfer of these rights not being subject to the limitations imposed on the transfer of proprietary rights by the Act.<sup>20</sup>

The question of rent was one of the most important things over which the relation between the proprietor and the tenant was based. Enhancement of rent and the mode of payment whether by kind or by cash were the issues of bone contention between the two parties. The usual form of rent was *batai*, but it varied from *tahsil* to *tahsil* and from one class to another class of land. So far as the well lands were concerned the common general rate was one-fourth *batai*.

In Moga the rate occasionally rose as high one-half while the rates of one-third were common in Moga and Zira; in Fazilka the rate of one-fourth was not uncommon. On *sailab* lands all along the river the rate was either one-third or one-fourth. On Sarhind Canal lands the rates varied widely; in Moga one-half was the common rate, the owner paying half the *abiana*. In the Kot Kapura Uttar Circle of Muktsar the same rate prevailed, but elsewhere in Muktsar the usual rate was one-third or one-fourth, the tenant paying the whole of *abiana*.

In Fazilka the usual rate was one-fourth, one-third being rare. On *nahri* lands the usual rate in Moga, Zira and Ferozepore *roht* was one-half the owner and the payment of *abiana* and *Khushaistiya* in the same proportion. In the rest of the district the commonest rate was one-fourth in which cases the tenant paid both *abiana* and *khushaistiya*.<sup>21</sup> The *batai* being more or less fixed by custom, the owner faced some difficulty in getting tenants if he raised it, but he faced no difficulty if he raised the *kharch* that he took.<sup>22</sup> King, the Settlement

19. R. R., 1904-05, p. 8. "Applications increased in Ferozepore principally in the Fazilka tahsil and here the Deputy Commissioner attributes the litigation to a desired on the part of landlords to prevent their tenants obtaining higher status by long and undisputed possession." R. R., 1911-12, p. 8.

20. R. R., 1901-02, p. 14.

21. Ferozepore S. R., 1910-14, p. 11.

22. Rev. and Agri. (Dept.), L. R. (Branch), July 1901, No. 14-15A, p. 13.

Officer of Fazilka said : "In several cases complaints have been made to me that though the landlord make deductions from the common heaps on account of menial's dues yet the menials on whose account the deductions are made are not to be found in the village and the landlord appropriates to himself what he has taken in their name."<sup>23</sup> One of the owners in Suner village remarked : "The owner always feels some satisfaction when he gets the better of the tenant where such conditions prevail, it is certainly impossible to expect an owner to be ever in a mood to give concessions to the tenant."<sup>24</sup>

Cash or kind rent was generally determined by the condition which gave the zamindar a greater share of profit. It is generally felt that rent in kind is substituted for cash rent with the increase of production of commercial crops. But in Ferozepore there was a widespread shift to produce rent in the wake of commercialisation during British period. Even after the introduction of cash rent in the period of the rise of price and good crops the zamindar switched over to kind rent in time of the failure of crops.

One of the owners of Zira tahsil told "only seven or eight years ago land used to give good crops. The prices were high and we could rent land at the rate of from Rs. 10 to 15 a *ghumoon* (0.826 acres) for *barani* and Rs. 35 to Rs. 50 for *nahri* land. Now thing has become very different. We have had a number of failures of crops and the yields have gone down considerably. No body seems to be prepared to take land on cash rent. In these days *batal* is better even for the owner, since no tenant has any money to pay cash and the cost we can get as owners is a promise to pay after harvest but to secure is another matter. In case of *batal* rent we owners get our share if anything at all is produced."<sup>25</sup>

It has recently been argued that cash rent on Punjab was characteristic of region with uncertain harvests and low yield.<sup>26</sup> But this argument is not valid so far as Ferozepore district is concerned. Cash rent was not the district feature in the backward bet region and just an opposite trend was visible there. Cash rent were comparatively

23. *Ibid.*

24. *An Economic Survey of Suner* (1936), p. 140.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

26. N. Bhattacharya 'Agrarian Change in Punjab 1880-1940,' p. 226.

rare in the bet circles and was found on best lands.<sup>27</sup> It was found in Zira tahsil that in the *rohi* cash rent were found in almost every village and they were fixed every year with reference to prices and the mature of the seasons, they were usually taken on the best lands. In the *bet* only 40 out of the 269 villages cash rent prevailed.<sup>28</sup> Secondly, it was popular only with the business like Jat but with no one else."<sup>29</sup> It was highest 34 percent where the lands owned by the Nawab of Mamdot were let on cash rents while cash rents prevailed in 7 percent of the cultivated areas in Moga, Zira and Ferozepore and only 3 percent each in Muktsar and Fazilka.<sup>30</sup>

#### Spread of Tenancy Cultivation

Recent scholars on Punjab placed three main arguments for the spread of tenancy cultivation. First, Niladri Bhattacharya has pointed out that it was during British period after 1880s the proper recording of rights led to the increase of a more complete registration of tenancy. His opinion perhaps finds an echo in the views of J. M. Dunnet, a Settlement Officer, investigating the reasons for the sharp fall in the recorded area in Ludhiana reported in 1911 that during the previous settlement operation (1878-83) "all land in a village cultivated by a village owner was shown as a *khudkasht* whether it was belonged to him or to another."<sup>31</sup> Second, Mridula Mukherjee observes that the increase of tenancy cultivation was due to the large scale dispossession of small peasants through mortgage. Peasant after mortgaging his land most often cultivated the same land on tenancy cultivation.<sup>32</sup> Third, the state policy of granting huge estate of 100 to 500 acres in the canal colonies inevitably encouraged tenancy cultivation. Direct cultivation on such large scale was impossible within the technological constraints of the time.<sup>33</sup> Apart from the reasons stated above, tenancy cultivation in Ferozepore grew out of peculiar circumstances.

27. *Ferozepore S. R.*, 1910-14, p. 10.

28. *Zira A. R.*, 1913, p. 22.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ferozepore S. R.*, 1910-14, p. 10.

31. Land Rev. and Agri: (Dept.) Sept. 1911, A No. 36 para 28 quoted in N. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

32. Mridula Mukherjee, 'Commercialisation and Agrarian Change in Pre-independence Punjab, K. N. Raj and others eds, *Essays on the Commercialization of Indian Agriculture*, Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 56.

33. N. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

# DEVELOPMENT OF TENANCY CULTIVATION IN FEROZEPUR

With the increase of cultivation in Ferozepore, the tenancy cultivation increase more or less in the same percentage with the provincial average.<sup>34</sup> The very nature of settlement, the peculiar condition of cultivation in the *bet* and the *rohl*, fragmentation of land *bet* led to the increase of tenancy cultivation in Ferozepore.

The very nature of the settlement facilitated the growth of tenancy cultivation. When the settlement was made in Fazilka, 84 leased villages were granted in proprietary right to lessees many of the tenants were made occupancy tenants on rents of double revenue.<sup>35</sup> The cash rented land in tahsil was often holdings let by non-residents to residents who in turn subletted on *batal*. Only 34½ per cent of the cultivated by the owners themselves. This was a small portion compared with the average of the whole province was 47 percent.<sup>36</sup> The self cultivating proprietors in Mamdot were also very small because of the largest landowner of this tract was the Nawab of Mamdot who "is the assignee of two-thirds of the revenue in respect of the area under assessment and the owner of a great portion of it."<sup>37</sup>

Fragmentation of lands in Moga and Fazilka tahsils put an obstacle and made things impossible for direct cultivation. The holdings consisted of a large number of scattered plots, seldom less than a dozen and often amounting for ordinary size holdings to fifty or more.<sup>38</sup> Many of the owners of Fazilka tahsil owned land in several villages<sup>39</sup> which stood in the way of direct cultivation. It has been told that "in the villages of Amritsar, Jullundar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Ferozepore and Ambala 52 per cent of the holdings were

34. Percentage of proportion of cultivated area under owners and tenants

		Years				
		1873-74	1890-91	1902-3	1912-13	1922-23
		1	2	3	4	5
Provincial average	Owner	66	54	44	49	45
	Tenants-at-will	29	34	43	43	45
Ferozepore	Owner	65	53	45	44	45
	Tenants-at-will	17	30	37	46	39

Source : R. R. for the respective years.

35. *Fazilka A. R.*, 1914, p. 18.

36. *Ibid.*, 20.

37. *Mamdot A. R.*, 1913, p. 1.

38. *Moga A. R.*, 1887, p. 51.

39. *Fazilka A. R.*, 1914, p. 18.



composed of 6 to 40 fragments, only 20 per cent were not fragmented."<sup>40</sup>

Another main reason of tenancy cultivation in Ferozepore was that cultivation alone did not bring forth sufficient earnings and extra income from other source was essential both for the large and small holders except in the case of Muktsar where holdings were very large (24 acres per owner).

The average cultivated area per owner in Moga was only 8 acres and in Zira 6, in *bet* 8 and in *rohi* 8 while in Muktsar 24 and in Fazilka 25 acres.<sup>41</sup> The small holdings of Moga and Zira led the proprietors to seek their fortune in other sources of income leaving cultivation on tenancy basis. A significant section of the proprietors of Moga was engaged either in trade or in service. They either carried on trade on their own account or emigrated to China, America and Australia to act as watchmen, carters and hawkers. Their income was always expanded on redeeming their own land or purchasing or taking or mortgaging the land of less prosperous neighbours.<sup>42</sup> The same was true with regard to the proprietors of Zira in *rohi* areas. *The Assessment Report* of Zira of 1913 observes: "In the *rohi* the proportion of the total cultivated area held by tenant at will has been doubled since settlement, a result due doubtless partly to an increased tendency on the part of landowners to seek profitable employment further afield and partly to the increased profits which landlords can derive."<sup>43</sup> Small holders, on the other hand, who had no option to earn extra income except cultivation worked as tenants. "The holdings of tenants at will are small averaging only two or three acres, but a tenants often takes a piece of land from each of the several owners and farmers than together. A large class of the tenants at will, however, are held by persons who are proprietors or occupancy tenants of other lands in the village but want an extra piece either because it is more conveniently suited than their own fields or because their family is increasing and they want another plough for one of their sons."<sup>44</sup> In Muktsar on the other hand, the self cultivating proprietors were large and the cultivated area per owner was sufficient to absorb full

40. N. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

41. *Moga A. R.*, 1912, *Zira A. R.*, 1913, *Muktsar A. R.*, 1913, *Fazilka A. R.*, 1914.

42. *Moga A. R.*, 1912, p. 13.

43. *Zira A. R.*, 1913, p. 4.

44. *Moga A. R.*, 1887, p. 54.

time energies in land. They did not go abroad in a large number.<sup>45</sup> That is why the tenancy cultivation did not increase in Muktsar. So it was not the large holdings alone but the small holdings were responsible for the spread of tenancy cultivation in the district.

Spread of tenancy cultivation in the *bet* regions of Zira and Ferozepore lay in the lack of agricultural zeal of the proprietors and the indebtedness of the owners to the moneylenders. "Obviously in most riverain tracts where many of the proprietors are not agriculturist, or if agriculturists inferior cultivators, the tenants at will occupies an important position in the agricultural economy of the *bet* a feature which is reflected in the comparatively low rent rates which prevail in it."<sup>46</sup> The remark was true with regard to the most of the lands occupied by Gujars, Naipals and Dogars who were in the habit of obtaining a tenant a subservient vassal who "will be at their call for all kinds of services than of income in grain or cash which they might derive from their land."<sup>47</sup> Secondly, the attempt of the owners of the *bet* to obtain unsecured loan provided a chance to have a hold of the moneylenders and some 22 per cent of the cultivated area in the *bet* was owned by moneylenders and other capitalists who naturally did not cultivate themselves.<sup>48</sup>

45. *Muktsar A. R.*, 1913, p. 11.

46. *Rev. and Agri. (Dept.) L. R. (Branch)* August, 1913. Prog. No. 17 A. p. 3.

47. *Zira A. R.*, 1888, p. 36.

48. *Rev. and Agri. (Dept.) L. R. (Branch)* August 1913, Prog. No. 18 A. p. 21.

## Princes and the People : A Study of Repression in the East Punjab States

GURSHARAN SINGH\*

In my paper I have tried to account for the growth of religio-political and agrarian movements in the erstwhile princely states of East Punjab namely Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala, Faridkot, Malerkotla and Kalsia vis-a-vis the repressive measures adopted by the Princes to quell these movements. About these states, at the outset, it may be stated that ethnically, linguistically and religiously, were inhabited by the same stock of people as were living in the British Punjab. The growth of political consciousness in Punjab began slowly to affect public opinion in the native states. The conditions obtaining in these states and the autocratic rule of the princes inspired concern among the people both in these states and in the adjoining areas in Punjab.

Herein I have endeavoured to bring forth certain aspects of the rise of the Akali Movement, Praja Mandal Movement, Peasant unrest in the States during the year 1920-1947. My attempt to do so may please be taken as indicative towards the general aspect of the subject which otherwise requires detailed interpretation based on the source material lying in Punjab State Archives, Patiala, National Archives, Delhi and with some individuals.

The princely states for years had been sealed books. High walls of political isolation had been reared up to prevent the infiltration of the urge for freedom and democracy. The Government in these states could not adjust themselves to the changed definition of legitimate demands and the fundamental rights of the public. In these states, political set up for years continued to be largely an arrangement arrived at between the princes and the British Government. From the heads of the autocratic and despotic rulers and so-affected

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officials, the theory of divine rights had not vanished. The people were tolerating them without a groan, the lavishness and squandering away of their hard earned money by the rulers who had no thought for the welfare of the subjects. Even Mahatma Gandhi had felt constrained to say that "every Indian prince is a Hitler in his own state; he can shoot his people without coming under any law."<sup>1</sup>

The administration in almost all the States of East Punjab as in many other states in India also was deliberately kept backward, antiquated and even medieval. For all the political purposes "the Prince was the Government and the Government was the Prince."<sup>2</sup>

In these states a vast majority of the population lived in villages. Only 10.4 per cent of the total population lived in the urban areas.<sup>3</sup> The rulers and their courtiers were concerned only with the revenues of the states and the chief criterion of efficiency of an administrator was the state of revenue under their control. These states existed for the pleasure of the princes. The Rajas and Maharajas had the reputation for spending most of their time abroad. The budgets of these states reveal how they were the very anti-thesis of the concept of a welfare states. People in general were leading a miserable life. Poverty dominated their lives and majority of them ever remained voiceless.

The *jagirdars*, the *biswedars*, the *Sardars* and the *Kakas* were busy imitating their rulers in the matter of demonstrative consumption. In the countryside money-lending was a very safe and lucrative business. The State power was at the back of the trader-cum-banker and the landed aristocracy and the whole burden of emergencies and crisis fell on the agriculturists.<sup>4</sup> Lack of enterprising spirit kept the Hindu traders away from industries but they did make profits out of bulk orders from the palace and the rich aristocracy, or from marketing of agricultural produce.<sup>5</sup> Corruption was rampant and

1. E.W.R. Lumby, *The Transfer of Power in India 1945-47*, London, 1954, p. 204; *The Chamber of Princes, The Crisis and the Press*, Delhi, 1936, pp. 12-13.
2. Personal interview with Nihal Singh Takshak, an ex-minister of the Jind State.
3. Penderal Moon, *The Future of India*, London, 1945, p. 9.
4. Ramesh Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement in East Punjab States*, Patiala, 1972, p. 40.
5. Village Chak and Sewa Singh Bapla, both of Malerkotla State quoted by Ramesh Walia, *op. cit.*, p. 40; and letter written by President, Punjab States Regional Council to Sardar Patel, 21 Oct. 1947, *AISPC Papers*, List No. 3, File No. 138, pp. 123-24, NMML, New Delhi.

in some states posts were openly auctioned. Everybody was constantly trying to please his superior. Factional intrigues were common. Every minister had his clique and there were plots and counter plots to gain access to the Ruler.<sup>6</sup> All states service were monopolised by the landed aristocracies or the urbanite Hindu traders and persons imported from British India. Only the army had a handful of jobs to provide to the common village folk.

Educationally and culturally the states were backward. Patiala of course, led all other states in starting a degree college in 1876 but the number of students remained as low as 290 in 1920-21.<sup>7</sup> Kapurthala had only an intermediate college. Faridkot had its colleges only in 1942 and Nabha in 1946. Facilities for female education were even worse.

The rulers in the States were strongly averse to the idea of universal education and awareness among masses. They had not only banned the entry of the newspapers in their states but had also disallowed any to be published in their territories. 'The Patiala Sentinal' and the 'Nabha Akhbar', were the mouthpieces of their respective Governments and can hardly be termed as newspapers. The attitude of the state administration towards newspapers would be clear from the following report of the District Magistrate in the Faridkot State<sup>8</sup> :

There would be no benefit from newspapers, rather these would unnecessarily propagate wrong and dangerous ideas. Never in our State was any newspapers sold.

Printed matter was not allowed entry and political literature was confiscated. Post offices, in most of the East Punjab States being under the control of their own Governments, performed the job of censoring letters with utmost perfection.<sup>9</sup>

6. A number of interesting incidents have been related by Sahib Chand Puri, *Ahalkari Sazshen*, Patiala, n.d. ; Jermani Das, *The Maharaja*, Bombay, 1969, p. 14.

7. Ramesh Walia, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

8. Confidential Diaries of the District Magistrate, No. 2920-21, Faridkot State Records, File No. 23, PSA, Patiala.

9. Ramesh Walia, *op. cit.*, p. 45. For further details, see W. W. Hunter, *Earl of Mayo* (Ruler of Indian Series, 1891), pp. 16-18 ; A. B. Aollet, *Earl of Northbrook* London, 1908, p. 135 ; Earl of Ranaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II, New York, 1928, p. 98 ; C. H. Hardinge, *Speeches*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1913, p. 318.

As the tide of freedom movement rose high, some concessions were offered by the British Government in the provinces. But in the princely states the absence of a numerically significant middle class and their comparative lag in educational, cultural and industrial development considerably delayed the politicisation. The industrial backwardness negated any active participation of the working class. So in the following years only the peasantry was left to assume the responsibility for unleashing political movements in the East Punjab States.<sup>10</sup> With the mass of the people in the province of Punjab getting drawn into the freedom movement and large sections of peasantry undergoing a radical transformation there, the people, in the states also experienced their first political vibrations.<sup>11</sup> The Singh Sabha Movement and Arya Samaj particularly their educational mission had played a tremendous part in this awakening.<sup>12</sup>

The Arya Samaj at Patiala was a popular organisation. Warburton, the District Magistrate of Patiala submitted a confidential report stating that sedition stalked abroad in the state, the Arya Samaj was the den of conspiracy and if prompt measures were not taken, the consequences would be horrible.<sup>13</sup>

On October 11, 1910 and the following days 84 persons were arrested in Patiala State. The majority of the accused were charged with being members of the Arya Samaj. It was alleged that the accused with others had conspired to deprive the king Emperor of Sovereignty of British rule.<sup>14</sup> When their houses were searched *havan samagri* was considered as gun powder.

The freedom struggle in the states in the modern historical sense, was waged for not more than two and a half decades—1921 to

10. S. A. Khan, *The Earl of Reading*, London, 1924, p. 302. For further details, see Lord Irwin's Note on the General Principal of Administration in the States, Foreign and Political Department No. 327, NAI, New Delhi.
11. Interview with Gujjar Singh of Bhanetha (Jind State), an ex-soldier and a former Akali Praja Mandal worker. "We were then in Egypt and the news from Punjab were disturbing all of us. Our officers were very much concerned over the signs of unrest among us." Quoted by Ramesh Walia, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
12. S. R. Sharma, *Punjab in Ferment in the Beginning of the 20th Century*, Delhi, 1965, p. 10.
13. Munshi Ram, Ram Deva, *The Arya Samaj and its Detractors - A Vindication*, Gurukul Kangri, 1910, pp. 61-62, quoted by Dr Shiv Kumar Gupta, in *Arya Samaj and the Raj*, Delhi, 1992, pp. 120-22.
14. *Ibid.*

1947. The first signs of unrest among the people in the East Punjab States appeared in twenties. The agitation against the Rowlatt Act, the widespread Punjab disturbances, the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, Gandhi's non-cooperation, and the Khilafat Movement had an impact on the states people.

Right from the inception of the Akali Movement in 1920 until its finale and even afterwards Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala did his best to ease the situation for the British officials.<sup>15</sup> But the activities of the Akalis emboldened the peasantry of the States and created an awakening among them. The threats of police officials and the *firman* of the Maharaja could no longer check them from expressing their resentment against British Imperialism and its supporters—the Sikh Princes.<sup>16</sup> The movement for the reform in Sikh shrines launched by Akalis showed the way to the Sikh peasants in the States.<sup>17</sup> Hundred of them participated in it, courted imprisonment and faced *lathi* blows in the Guru-ka-Bagh Morcha. For the first time the Princes' monopoly of leadership was effectively challenged. It was during the Jaito Morcha in 1923-24 when people in Patiala and Nabha openly preached disobedience and flaunted the orders of the State Government.

The abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha and the Akali involvement in the affair assumed wider ramifications and the area of controversy expanded. The propaganda of the press, particularly through such papers as *Akali*, *Akali te Pardesi*, *Sacha Dhandora*, *Daler-i-Hind*, *Bir Akali* and *Kirpan Bahadur* made a strong impact on the people in the Princely States.

The new ideology infused a new spirit, a new life in them and they came to know what they exactly required. The people under the influence of the political awakening in the neighbouring districts under British Government and as a consequence of their participation in the Akali movement their sacrifices and sufferings before, had made them bold.

15. For a detailed account of the Patiala State's measures to combat the Akali Movement and the activities of the Akalis in the Patiala State, see Sir Daya Kishan Kaul, Prime Minister, Patiala State's Note in Ganda Singh (ed.), *Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement*, Amritsar, 1965, pp. 183-92, also see Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement*, Delhi, 1978, p. 34,

16. Mohinder Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-72.

17. Gurcharan Singh, *Jiwan Sardar Sewa Singh Thikriwala* (Punjabi), Patiala, 1970, pp. 27-28.

The princes of the states got panicky and they started clamouring for reiteration of their sovereignty. They fully maintained proudly their long established tradition of active whole hearted cooperation and loyal assistance to the British Government during the troublesome decades of the Punjab History (1910-1925) especially in connection with the revolutionary movements like the Ghadar Movement, Babar Akali Lehr among the Sikhs.<sup>18</sup> But the Maharaja of Nabha who had some degree of patriotism in his character had then lent his moral support to the Sikh Ghadar movement in 1914 and to the Rowlatt Bill agitation. But on the other hand the Patiala State offered its active assistance and ungrudging cooperation in combating the Ghadar Movement, the political agitation of 1917 and the Gurdwara Reform Movement in 1920 down to the Jaito affairs.

The repressive role that Patiala openly played against the Akalis, was on the issue of abdication of Maharaja of Nabha. The Akalis were hunted down. Their meetings and organisations were banned. The Akali Dal took it as a challenge and organised series of Diwans with the avowed object of infusing courage among their rank and file and to expose the atrocities committed by the Patiala authorities. A *Shahi firman* was issued in August 1923 which forbade all activities against the Patiala Raj and the British Government. Several arrests were made, Sewa Singh Thikriwala, who was a prominent leader was also taken to custody. "Prosecution for wearing *kirpans* were also started. Even small axes meant for agricultural or domestic use were treated as offensive arms within the meaning of arms act. Military pickets were posted in central districts to support the police in dispersing the Akalis. Lists were prepared of all black turbaned Sikhs..."<sup>19</sup> The authorities checked the March of the Akali Jathas to Jaito, through Patiala territory. Patiala State provided the Punjab C. I. D., with all information against the Akalis and Babbars.

Despite all the repressions, the Akalis succeeded in their mission. The Gurdwara Act of 1925 was their hard earned achievement. All the Akali leaders were released by the Punjab Govt. but Sewa Singh Thikriwala was handed over to Patiala authorities. No case was instituted against him nor it was made clear for what offence or for

18. *Truth About Nabha*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1924, File No. 178, PSA, Patiala.

19. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Some Confidential Papers on Akali Movement*, Amritsar, 1965, pp. xvi-xvii.



what period he was to remain in the jail. The Maharaja of Patiala wanted to show the British Government that he could bring Sewa Singh Thikriwala and Akalis from Patiala to their knees. This gave the Akalis an impetus to launch an agitation. A new wave of repression and atrocities was let loose by the State authorities. All the workers of the Akali Dal were imprisoned and their properties confiscated.<sup>20</sup> The subjects were terrorised by the imposition of heavy penalties.

In a communication Daya Kishan Kaul, the Prime Minister of Patiala State wrote to Col. John Political Agent to the Governor General, an account of the services rendered by the ruler of Patiala in combating the Sikh agitation and the Akali movement. He explained in details the assistance rendered by the State in cooperating the Punjab C. I. D. in locating Sardul Singh Caveeshar a prominent Akali leader and keeping a watch on the political activities of Akalis. Daya Kishan Kaul proudly mentioned about the role Maharaja played in winning over the loyalists for creating dissension in the ranks of the Akali Dal. The Patiala State took drastic steps against the office bearer of the State Akali Dal. They were arrested and prosecuted.

Shiromani Akali Dal organised a series of Diwans at different places in Patiala under the leadership of Baba Kharak Singh. The first Diwan at Ghaloti was successful but the state authorities persecuted the participants and confiscated their properties.<sup>21</sup> The authorities warned the people that if they participated or aided the deputation in any way they would be severely dealt with. In the state all persons wearing black turbans were taken into custody. The Akali deputation under Baba Kharak Singh toured places like Longowal, Barnala, Charnarthal etc. The "loyalists" started a counter campaign against the Akalis through the newspaper, posters and hand bills.<sup>22</sup>

The repressive measure adopted by the States further strengthened the movement and ultimately led to the formation on 17 July, 1928 of a purely political organisation under the name of Punjab Riasti Praja Mandal.<sup>23</sup> Sewa Singh Thikriwala was elected as its President<sup>24</sup> and

20. Durlabh Singh, *Nirbhai Yodha*, Lahore, 1942, pp. 71-86.

21. *Asli Quami Dard*, January 26, 1929.

22. Tara Singh, *Meri Yad*, Amritsar, 1965, pp. 90-98.

23. Ramesh Walia, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Bhagwan Singh Longowalia as its Secretary both of whom were absent, for former being in jail and the latter outside the state because of a number of pending cases against him. The Praja Mandalist condemned the Rajas and Nawabs as 'worse than animals' and pleaded for Panchayati Raj.<sup>25</sup> The main aim of the Mandal movement was to get the political rights for the people.

At this stage Master Tara Singh launched a campaign against the Maharaja's policy of repression through the media of two dailies of the Akalis. The Maharaja had to release Thikriwala and other Akalis and resorted their properties. Master Tara Singh, however, continued his campaign against the misrule of Patiala. The Phulkian States chiefs jointly passed a law which came to be known as Hidayat 1988 B. K. (1932 A.D.). A joint committee was formed to quell the political agitations in Patiala, Jind and Nabha. Sewa Singh Thikriwala was again arrested in August 1933.<sup>26</sup> He resorted to hunger strike in jail and breathed his last on January 20, 1935. By this time the Maharaja had many Akalis and Praja Mandalists in jails.

The propaganda of the Akali leaders proved useful in tearing as under the veil that hid the autocracy prevalent in the states and helped in bring the people's case in the forefront. Following them the Praja Mandal in Patiala brought out a lucid exposition of the crux of the problem. All this caused a flutter among the princes. About this very time came tales almost incredible like those in the Arabian Nights but without their humour, of abductions, rapes and cold blooded murders from Patiala. The findings of the committee of All India State People Association sent round a wave of horror into the hearts of the people. How such atrocities were allowed to be perpetrated under the very nose of the Government was an astonishment to the people. No security of the person and property was guaranteed to the people of the States.<sup>27</sup> They raised the cry in their own states and courted imprisonment, faced ruthless repression, bore bullets on their chests and suffered all sorts of indignities at the hands of the Governments of their States.

The attitude adopted by the Rulers in respect of the People's movement may be gauged from the following statement made by

25. C.I.D. Reports vide P. M. Office File No. 542, PSR (PSA).

26. *The Hindustan Times*, January 23, 1935.

27. File No. 178, PGRO, *Patiala Darpan*, pp. 3, 46, 74, 124.

Maharaja Yadvindra Singh of Patiala<sup>28</sup> :

My ancestors have won the State by the sword and I mean to keep it by the sword. I do not recognize any organization to represent my people or to speak on their behalf. I am their sole and only representative. No organisation such as Praja Mandal can be allowed to exist within the State. If you want to do Congress work, get out of the State. The Congress can terrify the British Government but if it ever tries to interfere in my State it will find me a terrible resister. I cannot tolerate any flag other than my own to be flown within my boundaries. You stop your Praja Mandal activities, otherwise I shall resort to such repression that your generations to come will not forget it. When I see some of my dear subjects drifting away into another fold, it touches the very core of my heart. I advise you to get out of the Mandal and stop all kind of agitation; or else remember, I am a military man, my talk is blunt and my bullet straight.

In all the States of East Punjab there appeared signs of discontent among the people against the denial of civil liberties and among the peasants against the *biswedars* (landlords) who had the backing of the State Governments. The progress of the freedom movement under the inspiration from the Indian National Congress, encouraged urban traders, lawyers and others in the Princely States to participate in political activities.<sup>29</sup> (Seth Ram Nath and his group started their work of Harijan welfare at Jaito. Sunder Lal, Advocate, did similar work in Bassi, Harbans Lal, at Bhatinda, Des Raj, at Mansa, Balmukand at Sangrur, Narain Dutt and Brish Bhan both at Sunam—all lawyers, were drawn into the political arena during this period.<sup>30</sup>) This gave a new dimension to the freedom movement in the States and also created a new question of the urban-rural representation in different organizations.<sup>31</sup>

Under the leadership of Giani Zail Singh, Gurbax Siagh, Janga Singh and Sandhura Singh the Faridkot State Praja Mandal put

28. M. K. Gandhi, *The Indian States Problem*, Ahmedabad, 1941, p. 368.

29. Presidential Address of Chatter Singh Maur, Amritsar, n.d. Proceedings of the Conference vide PSR, Prime Minister's Office, File No. 744 and the Proceedings of the Ludhiana Session of the AISPC, vide Faridkot State Records 1939, File No. 369, Patiala (PSA).

30. Ramesh Walia, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

31. Janga Singh's Urdu Pamphlet, *Dukhi Janta ke Dili Ubal*, Ferozepore, 1939, p. 7.

forward the most progressive demands ever made by anyone in the State. These included restoration of civil liberties, full freedom of speech and association, end of corruption and share cropping system, elected assembly, fixing of working hours for labour in the State, establishment of municipal committees in towns and rapid industrialisation.<sup>32</sup> In Faridkot State a crisis developed in April 1946. The incident of hoisting the Congress flag by the school children and its forcible removal by the State police led to the development of a full-fledged satyagrah. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru showed keen interest in the affairs of this East Punjab State.<sup>32</sup> The gravity of the matter was realised by Raja Harinder Singh and he chose to negotiate with Pandit Nehru and the agreement they arrived at came to be known as Nehru-Harindera Pact.<sup>33</sup>

Hardly had the political situation stabilised when the demand for constitutional reforms was revived by the Praja Mandal and the merger of the States was advocated. During this period the attitude of the State Government in Nabha was also less rigid. In one of his letters the Nabha Chief Minister wrote "We in our state are not interfering with the right of free expression and do not stop people from hoisting Congress flag."<sup>34</sup> In February 1947 Dadri witnessed a revolt and a parallel Government was established by the Praja Mandal volunteers. It was in this movement that Nihal Singh Takshak, a Praja Mandal leader came to the forefront.<sup>35</sup> In Kapurthala State, too, people refused to pay Malwa tax. The State Government arrested Master Hari Singh and other political workers. In Malerkotla all the leading Praja Mandal workers including Sahib Singh Salana, were arrested.<sup>36</sup>

As stated above the peasants in the States had been suffering long

32. *The Tribune*, Lahore, quoted in *Faridkot Tahrik* (Urdu), n.d., p. 95.

33. According to this Pact the 'Registration of Societies Act' in Faridkot was repealed in June 1946 and the people were allowed to hold Conferences. Harbans Lal, 'Report on Punjab States' AISPC Papers, List No. 3, File No. 138, p. 258, 19 December, 1946 (NMML) and Ramesh Walia, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-75.

34. Chief Minister Nabha's letter to the Resident Punjab State, 8 June, 1946, Nabha State Records, File No. 509 E, Patiala (PSA).

35. *The Hindustan Times*, 28 March, 1947, and *The Indian News Chronicle*, 8 March, 1948; personal interview with Nihal Singh Takshak.

36. Sahib Singh Salana, *Aap Biti* (Punjabi) (n.d.), p. 134.

under different types of burdens.<sup>37</sup> Land revenue and water rate charged from the State's people had been higher than those paid by their neighbours in the Punjab and cultivators had been forced to receive lower prices for their produce.<sup>38</sup> The demand for reduction of land revenue and water rate, relief from indebtedness, abolition of 'begar' (forced labour) right to 'shamlat' (village common land), right of *Shikar*, amendment of *nazool* law, etc., were expressed in Public meetings in pamphlets and posters by the Kisan Sabha members.<sup>39</sup> The tenant movement developed rapidly into an open confrontation between the tenants and the States.<sup>40</sup>

The tenants in some States at one stage stopped paying rent and later took forcible possession of land.<sup>41</sup> The people in the States of Patiala, Kapurthala, Malerkotla, Jind, suffered double tyranny and repression, for the State Government and feudal landlords vied with each other in perpetrating repression on the peasantry. A tenant organization known as the 'Muzara Committee' was set up at a secret meeting.<sup>42</sup> Sunam, Bhadaur and Mansa were the three main pockets of tenant villages and all the three were areas of Praja Mandal activities.<sup>43</sup> During the year 1940 the slogan 'no batai' to the land-

37. For details, see Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Itihas* (Pbi.), Delhi, 1972, pp. 48, 84.

38. Mridula Mukherjee, 'Peasant Movement in a Princely State Patiala 1937-38', *Proceedings Punjab History Conference*, Fifteenth Session 13-15 March, 1981, pp. 311-12. Also see Mridula Mukherjee's article 'Communists and Peasants in Punjab; Focus on the Muzara Movement in Patiala 1937-53,' *Studies in History*, Vol. III, Nos. 1-2, Biannual Journal of the Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 401-446.

39. References to these activities are scattered all over the records available on peasant unrest. For details, see Karanbir Singh Mann, *The Agrarian System of Patiala State, 1900-48*, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1985; also see Prime Minister's office File No. 1554, 1546, 1547, 1553, 1555, 1561, 1650 PSR (PSA).

40. There are two parts of the Peasant Movement in the State one was the general peasant or Kisan Movement and the other the Muzara or Tenants movement. Personal interview with Gurcharan Singh Randhawa who actively participated in the peasant movement.

41. Karan Bir Singh Mann, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-75.

42. Ramesh Walia, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

43. Patiala State Records, Prime Minister's Office File No. 6157/G-2155, Patiala (PSA); copy of the hand-bill preserved in Patiala State Records, Prime Minister's Office File No. 750, Patiala (PSA); also see, Ijlas-i-Khas, File Nos. 651, 1261, 1263, PSR (PSA).

lords caught the imagination of the peasants and the tenants began to take possession of the lands from which they had been earlier ejected by the *bliswedars*.<sup>45</sup>

The anti-imperialist upsurge in the country during war and post-war period inspired the tenants in all the States to renew their struggle against the landlords.<sup>46</sup> About four hundred tenant villages were affected by the movement. Tenants, workers and artisans strongly demanded the abolition of *begar* system.<sup>47</sup> Clashes took place between the landlords and their men and the police on one hand and tenants and their women-folk on the other. In 1945, a new twenty-one members *Muzara* War Council was set up. It was more or less a Communist organisation and under its leadership armed guards were mobilized. Maharaja Yadvinder Singh in one of his communications to the Maharaja of Jind, wrote<sup>48</sup> :

The Communist movement, it appears, is gathering momentum and our States are being made the centres of subversive activities in an increasing measures....We should take serious notice of the reprehensible activities of the so-called leaders of Kisan movement, and stop them from misguiding and exciting innocent people.

44. Prime Minister's Office File, Ijlas-i-Khas, File No. 651, 1261, 1263, (PSA) For further details, see Mohinder Singh, *Peasant Movement in Pepsu*, Patiala, 1990.
45. Patiala Tenants on the March issued by the Muzara Committee (Lahore, n.d.), p. 12; Mridula Mukherjee, 'Peasant Movement in Princely State-Patiala, 1937-48.' *PPHC*, 15th Session, 1981, p. 315.
46. Jasmail Singh and Mohinder Singh, 'The Tenant Struggle in Pepsu', *PPP*, Vol. XVIII-I, April, 1984, p. 232.
47. The system of *begar* or 'Veth' (in other Indian States) prevailed in almost all the Princely States in India; and all classes of labours, workmen and artisans were compelled to work for the Princes and their officials with no remuneration other than barest little food. These subjects were compelled to work at any time for any period that the State may require. Even the women, young or old were not exempted. If any of these people, men or women, failed to work properly, they used to be flogged or otherwise tortured. For details, see, P.L. Chudgar, *Indian Princes Under British Protection*, London, 1929, p. 33.
48. Quoted by Ramesh Walia, *op. cit.*, p. 163, For details see the copy of the letter which was also sent to the Nabha Government, Nabha State Records, Prime Minister's Office File No. 82-B, Patiala (PSA).

The Praja Mandal leaders were sympathetic to the Communists and tenants cause and in their bold move passed a resolution asking for abolition of *biswedari* system and raising of occupancy tenants to the status of proprietors.<sup>49</sup> Thus a gradual fusion of the Praja Mandal, Congress and Kisan workers became prominent in 1946 and 1947. The unity oriented towards Communists and Socialists emerged among the political workers. The fact that any kind of political activity was illegal in the States had led to its being conducted under the cover of *dharmic* or religious gatherings till a very late stage so that very often it was not really clear to the people who exactly was a communist and who a Communalist.<sup>50</sup>

In Patiala State a large number of occupancy tenants refused to pay *batai* to the landlords. In early 1947, 228 villages came into the fold of the 'no batai' campaign. The *muzaras* took charge of 1.32 lakh *bighas* of land armed with sticks, stones and unity. The General Secretary of Patiala Zamindara Sabha warned the Government that if tenants were left unchecked for six months more "there will be an open revolution throughout the State."<sup>51</sup> The Communists continued in the lead of the Peasant movement. The militant mood of the tenants forced the State administration to come to terms with the tenants. A Gazette extraordinary called *Farman-i-Shahi* issued in March 1947, conceded the principle of 'physical partition' of each holding between the landlords and the occupancy tenants on certain terms.<sup>52</sup> In fact this was a clever move on the part of the Maharaja of Patiala in order to gain time. It was under these circumstances of an on-going

49. Note of 'Tenants Problem in Patiala State submitted by All India States People Conference, Patiala State, AISPC Papers, File No. 133-A, 1945-48 (NMML). Even in the year 1946 "in the districts of Patiala, Bassi, Sunam, Barnala arrests in large number of tenants are being made. The Police, at the time of search of their (tenant's) houses commits barbarities and excesses as their acts are favoured and appreciated by the *biswedari* officials. The favouritism of the State can be gauged from the fact that an additional police force of 1000 men and two special Magistrates has been raised." For details, see Harbans Lal, 'Report on Punjab States', AISPC Papers, List No. 3, File No. 138, 19 Dec., 1946 (NMML).

50. Mridula Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

51. Mridula Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 320; Letter dated 13-1-1947 File on Landlords Association, Prime Minister's Office Case No. T-1 of 2001 B.K., PSR (PSA).

52. Mridula Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-22.

and ever-widening conflicts between the landlords and the tenants that the process of integration of the princely states began. It may be stated that these remnants the Maharajas were kept on their thrones by British as barriers to the spread of freedom movement. The British also nursed their ambition of a separate political identity and encouraged some of them to claim independence from the Indian Union on the eve of transfer of power. The British Government even at the last moment wanted to grant them full freedom over their subjects.

In retrospect if we look at the things the struggle for freedom in India had entered upon a new phase after the first World War. And one of the new dimensions we observe, was the rise of political consciousness in the Princely States in Punjab. In the new climate the Akali Movement had created ferment and made the all mighty Maharajas to rub their eyes. The Praja Mandal Movement was born soon after, and it received the necessary help, support and guidance from the former. During its first phase from 1928-1938 the Praja Mandal Movement in East Punjab States remained essentially a Sikh peasant movement and its main objective was voicing the peasant grievances. The movement demanded decrease in the burden of taxes particularly the land revenue, starting of schools and opening of dispensaries in the rural areas and construction of roads and relief from rural indebtedness. The movement also demanded an end to the autocratic rule of the princes and establishment of responsible government. All the leading workers were Akalis and it was the Sikh religious gathering known as the Dewans that the message of movement was delivered. Being a purely political organisation, Praja Mandal was not allowed to function openly whereas the princes were reluctant to clash with the Akalis. The example of the mighty British Govt., yielding to the Sikhs in 1920-25 was before them.

The education backwardness precluded any participation by the Urban intelligentsia. The traders and service-men were all loyal to the princes because of their own class interests. It is evident that the burden of all crises and emergencies fell on the peasants who had a basis for participation in the movement. Tenant cultivators being one of the most exploited classes became active and came under the influence of communist movement. Most of the leading positions in the Government in the States were held by the *biswedars* (absentee landlords). The tenants had, therefore, no illusions that they would ever get justice.



Initially the Maharajas tried outright suppression of these movements through brute forces which is symbolised by the death in jail of Sewa Singh Thikriwala. Soon it was felt it was not enough. So loyalists were mobilised to stem the growth of political consciousness both inside and outside the princely states. As the tenant movement became stronger, the landlords became more active. The rulers amply helped them by enacting special laws to thwart the new awakening.

In the post World War Second period communalism became a ready instrument in the hands of the Maharajas and they tried to rouse and use the sentiment in their favour, by dubbing the Praja Mandalist as Communalists. It will not be far fetched to say that it was because of this when the demand for the merger of Sikh States was raised it had to face stiff opposition from the Akali Dal who did not want these Sikh States to be submerged in the flood waters of "Hindu Dominion." It was under such circumstances that Pepsu came into existence in 1948 which was termed as a Homeland for the Sikhs by Sardar Patel.

## Congress and the Punjabi Suba Demand

KRISHAN GOPAL LAMBA\*

The Congress commitment to the formation of linguistic provinces dates back to 1920-21 and since then there were number of Congress resolutions supporting this idea till at last in 1948. The Congress utilised the Akali struggle in Punjab by accepting it as an associate movement in the freedom struggle. Infact the leadership of the Congress gave such assurances in the pre-independence period that the future Constitution of India would not be formed without the consent of the Sikhs. Jawaharlal Nehru also promised with Sikhs that "the brave Sikhs of the Punjab are entitled to special consideration. I see nothing wrong in the arena and set up in the north wherein the Sikhs can also experience glow of freedom."<sup>1</sup> There was, however, a clear change in the outlook of the Congress leaders with the achievement of independence, speaking before the Constituent Assembly on November 27, 1947 soon after partition, Jawaharlal Nehru while conceding the linguistic principle, remarked, 'first things must come first and the first thing is the security and stability of India.'<sup>2</sup>

In 1948, a committee was appointed by the Indian National Congress at its Jaipur Session to consider the question of linguistic province and to review the position in the light of the report of the Dar Commission. This committee known as the J.V.P. committee (consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya) was the first Congress body to sound a note of warning against the linguistic principle when it stated that :

- (a) "when the Congress had given the seal of its approval to the general principle of linguistic provinces, it was not faced with the practical application of the principle and hence, it

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1. *The Statement*, July 7, 1946.

2. Report of the States Reorganisation Commission Manager, Government of India Press, New Delhi, 1955, p. 14.

had not considered all the implications and consequences that arose from this practical application.<sup>2</sup>

- (b) The primary consideration must be the security, unity and economic prosperity of India and every separatist and disruptive tendency should be rigorously discouraged.
- (c) Language was not only a binding force, but also a separating one,<sup>3</sup> and
- (d) the old Congress policy of having linguistic provinces could only be applied after careful thought had been given to each separate case and without creating serious administrative dislocation or mutual conflicts which would jeopardise the political and economic stability of the country.<sup>4</sup>

This committee also suggested the postponement of redistribution of the province on linguistic basis under plea that such a step would cause serious administrative dislocation and political and economic instability. The committee made a special reference to the problem of State reorganisation of the northern area and categorically expressed itself against any such rectification of the boundaries in the immediate future.<sup>5</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, provided an explanation of the change in the Congress attitude towards the reorganisation of the States. Linking it with the partition of the country, he said that "the other partitions in the country have undoubtedly made many of us hesitant about changing the map of India...for...to unsettle and uproot the whole of India on the basis of a theoretical approach on linguistic division seems to me an extraordinarily unwise thing."<sup>6</sup> The demand of the Punjabi Suba was strongly opposed by Congress party. The Congress leaders continued to dub this demand as communal and a subterfuge to create a Sikh state or a homeland for the Sikhs. The particular strategy of the Congress leadership inspired from the centre was to organise the Akali (Sikh) elements against the demand of a Punjabi Suba. Giani Kartar Singh the then Revenue Minister and one of the biggest protagonist of the Punjabi Suba at one time, was made to characterise the demand as a demand for Sikh State, and

3. *Ibid*, p. 15.

4. Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, p. 15.

5. *Ibid*.

6. *Jawahar Lal Nehru's Speeches* (Ministry of information & Broadcasting), New Delhi, 1954, p. 57.

such, unjustified. While addressing a conference of the Harijans in Jullundur on 18th July 1950 he opposed the demand by saying, "The Sikhs were in majority only in two tehsils, Tarn Taran and Moga, hence the demand was unjustified.<sup>7</sup> That Giani Kartar Singh should call this a Sikh demand could hardly be appreciated. Ishar Singh Majhal, an old Akali and the then Development Minister, while addressing congregation at the Ambala declared that he could not cherish the idea of a separate homeland for the Sikhs which would confine them in an airtight compartment. The demand for Sikhistan would necessarily tend to further division of the land.<sup>8</sup>

The Congress policy to spearhead the opposition to the creation of the Punjabi speaking State created a rift between the Congress and the Sikhs after merely 2½ years of collaboration and began to wean the Sikhs away from the Congress.<sup>9</sup> It was then that the Shiromani Akali Dal issue a Show Cause Notice in early July 1950 to the Panthic M.L.A.'s who had joined the Congress Assembly party in 1948.<sup>10</sup> It was found that a sizeable number of Akalis were not in favour of leaving the Congress. Though the Akali did not leave the Congress, but this move of the Akali Dal sparked off opposition of the Congress amongst the Sikhs. It made the Congress high command to mobilise its forces amongst the Sikhs to oppose the creation of Punjabi Suba. It was at this time that Partap Singh Kairon, President Punjab State Congress announced his extreme opposition to the division of the State on linguistic basis. He called a convention on December 15, 1950 of all Congress and Nationalist Sikhs to combat the growing communalism among the Sikhs. He declared that the Congress and Nationslist Sikhs would stoutly oppose the creation of a Punjabi speaking state.<sup>11</sup>

The election in 1952 was fought on the basis of Punjabi Suba issue. Jawaharlal Nehru in his electioneering tour strongly opposed the creation of a Punjabi Suba, and named it to be a division of the

7. *The Tribune*, September 6, 1950.

8. *Ibid.*, October 15, 1950.

9. On March 15, 1948, Akali Legislators joined the Congress. Kartar Singh had a resolution passed by the Executive Committee, stating that the Akali Dal would not engage in political activity henceforth.

10. Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba : The Story of the Struggle*, Delhi, 1970, p. 207.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

country. Speaking at Patiala on the 4th January 1952 when some activists of Punjabi Suba demand interrupted him during his speech by shouting out the slogans "Le Ke Rahenge Punjabi Suba." Nehru declared, "I will not allow any further trouble. If there is any trouble in any part of India, I would put it down with all my strength."<sup>12</sup>

Congress stand on the demand of linguistic state as announced at the Hyderabad session in January 1952, and reiterated in working committee resolution adopted in May 1953 and further reaffirmed at Kalyani in January 1954 was that in considering the reorganisation of States all relevant factors should be borne in mind, such as the unity of India, National security and defence, cultural and linguistic affinities, administrative convenience, financial consideration and economic progress both of the States and the nation as a whole.<sup>13</sup> However, this change of attitude on the part of the Congress did not slow down the pace with which the demand for linguistic states was gaining momentum. Forced by 58 days fast of Patti Sriramula and his death, the Government of India had to concede the demand for Andhra and finally decided to appoint a high-powered commission to consider the question of the reorganisation of the States.<sup>14</sup> The State Reorganisation Commission which visited Punjab in April 1954 went into the question of Punjabi Suba very minutely. The working committee of All India Congress decided in April 1954 that all Congress Committees, and Congressmen should have freedom to represent their point of view before the S.R.C.<sup>15</sup> The Punjab Congress Committee, accordingly decided that Congress members would meet the S.R.C. in their individual capacity. It is noteworthy that while a majority of Hindu Congressmen advocated merger of Himachal Pradesh and the Pepsu in the Punjab; a large number of Sikh Congressmen supported the demand for the Punjabi speaking State. On the otherhand a deputation headed by Nihal Singh, a Congress M.L.A. and Parliamentary Secretary Shrimati Chandravati belonging to Mahendergarh district demanded the merger of their district with Delhi State.<sup>16</sup> Hans Raj Sharma Congress leader from Phagwara in his dissenting note strongly pleaded for the formation of Maha

12. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

13. Gulshan Rai, *Formation of Haryana*, Delhi, 1987, p. 64.

14. *The Times of India*, January 16, 1953.

15. Resolution on States Reorganisation 1920-56 (New Delhi, AICC, n.d.).

16. "Evidence Before SRC," *The Tribune*, June 28, 1954.

Punjab. He urged "Everybody knows that tiny States like Pepsu, H.P. and Delhi have little justification for their continued existence in their present form.... During the last three to four years the South has witnessed the emergence of a powerful mass urge for redemarcation of boundaries of States on linguistic and cultural basis. This powerful mass movement in which Congress contributed as much as anybody else had its repercussion on the North as well. Therefore, the suggestion that the issue of reorganisation as far as Northern India (as given by the Advisory Committee in Pepsu) concerned should be postponed for the time being is an abstract proposition having least touch with the living currents of mass opinion... Delhi, Pepsu and H P. are transitory phenomena and their continued existence will draw support from neither the Central Government nor the people."<sup>17</sup>

The Congress party supported the demand for the enlarged Punjab. The Punjab Government also advocated the formation of a greater Punjab comprising the Punjab, Pepsu, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and few districts of U.P.<sup>18</sup>

The State Reorganisation Commission in its report issued in October 1955 rejected the demand for Punjabi Suba and recommended the merger of Punjab, Pepsu and Himachal Pradesh. Executive Committee of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee welcomed the report.<sup>19</sup>

Even the Congress Sikhs in a convention on November 5, disapproved of the States reorganisation Commission's report on Punjab and stated that justice had not been done to the minority community.<sup>20</sup>

As the Akali Dal was dissatisfied and disgruntled against the recommendations of the State Reorganisation Commission, parleys were held between Jawaharlal Nehru and Master Tara Singh. These resulted in an agreement which was known as Regional Formula.

Under the Regional Formula, the State was divided into two regions called Punjabi speaking and Hindi speaking regions. The Punjab Pradesh Congress was sharply divided on the issue of regional scheme. One group was against any sort of comp-

17. "Dissenting Notes on Advisory Committee Report," *The Hindustan Standard*, May 3, 1954.

18. Gulshan Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

19. *The Hindustan Times*, October 17, 1955.

20. *The Tribune*, November 7, 1955

ulsion and maintained that Punjabi should not be imposed on unwilling people who do not have to enter into trade and administration, the other group led by Giani Kartar Singh, stressed that any alteration in the Regional formula would mean inviting agitation from other side.<sup>21</sup> Fifty Congress members took a deputation to the Prime Minister and submitted a memorandum.<sup>22</sup> Fourteen members of the Congress Legislative party resigned from the Congress membership on language issue. This group included important members like Jagat Narain, Shrimati Sita Devi, Ralla Ram, Suraj Bhan, Vaid Ram Dayal and Sher Singh. The language controversy as a result came to the forefront in the local Congress politics. It strengthened the communal trends in the local Congress politics. It strengthened the communal trends in the organisation, for it sharply divided the Hindu and Sikh Congressmen. Important members like Jagat Narain, one time General Secretary of the Punjab Pradesh Congress and Minister in the Punjab Cabinet openly wrote against the Regional Formula in the press.<sup>23</sup> But on the other side Regional Formula gave a boost to Sikh Congressmen and they were able to pull many Akali leaders into the Congress fold. As a result it became possible to contain the activities of Akali Dal in protecting Sikh *dharma*, language and culture. In spite of the opposition of Master Tara Singh the General Conference of Akali Dal (November 1956) decided by 350-322 votes to merge the Akali party into the Congress.<sup>24</sup>

The Regional formula could not satisfy the Akalis for long time. Master Tara Singh raised the demand of Punjabi Suba once again. As reaction of this there was a radical change in the attitude of the leadership of the Congress. It appeared that Congress wanted to oust Master Tara Singh from the arena of Sikh politics. Master Tara Singh was made to leave Presidentship of the S.G.P.C. in October 1958. And an unknown Congressman Prem Singh Lallpura took over. Congress leadership believed that Gurdwaras were main source of power for Akalis. It therefore wanted to have hold over the Shriomani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee.

To achieve that end Congress party directly contested two

21. Proceeding Register-Meeting of the Punjab Pradesh Congress held at Sonapat (June 28, 1957) Patiala Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee, Unpublished.

22. *Ibid.* (May 23, 1956).

23. *Ibid.* (July 29, 1956).

24. Kshitish, *Storm in Punjab*, New Delhi, 1984, p. 119.

elections in 1954 and 1960 under the banner of its newly formed organisation Khalsa Dal and Sadh Sangat Board respectively but could not be successful.<sup>25</sup>

Master Tara Singh again threatened to launch an agitation for the creation of Punjabi Suba in January 1960. Congress Government of Punjab accepted the challenge of Akali Dal. Master Tara Singh and other Akali leaders were arrested on December 1960. Sant Fateh Singh, Vic-President of the Akali Dal went on fast unto death to move the Prime Minister to concede the legitimate demand for Punjabi province. Jawaharlal Nehru was now prepared to concede the claims for the Punjabi language and appealed to the Sant to give up fast as in his opinion Punjabi Suba was not in the interest of the Sikhs of Punjab or India.<sup>26</sup>

In the meantime Partap Singh Kairon, in a shrewd political move released Master Tara Singh and arranged a meeting between him and the Prime Minister. Aware of the rising popularity of the Sant Fateh Singh and to avoid accusation of being responsible for his death, Master Tara Singh met Jawaharlal Nehru at Bhavnagar. At the Bhavnagar Congress Session in 1961, Nehru declared emphatically that there was no discrimination against the Sikhs. He said that the Punjab itself was a Punjabi Suba and the Punjabi was the dominant language there.<sup>27</sup>

After their assurance, Master Tara Singh telegraphically asked Sant Fateh Singh to break his fast, which he did. Thus Akali agitation was flopped because of Congress policy of dividing the Akali Dal. The Prime Minister Nehru remained resolutely opposed to the creation of Punjabi Suba until the end of his life. Kairon had dominated Punjab Politics from 1956 till 1964 period in which he had the backing of Nehru. He strongly opposed the creation of a Punjabi-speaking State on political consideration, as he feared that the Congress would go out of office in Punjab and that his political career would suffer a set back if Punjabi-speaking was created. Jawaharlal Nehru died on May 27, 1964. Partap Singh Kairon resigned from the Chief

25. Fateh Singh, *Facts About Punjabi Suba Agitation*, Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, 1960, p.2.

26. Satya M. Rai, *Punjab Since Partition*, New Delhi, 1986, p. 305.

27. D. E. Smith, Donald Eugene, *Nehru and Democracy: The Political Thought of an Asian Democrat*, Bombay, 1988, p. 446.

28. *Indian Express*, August 16, 1965.



Ministership on June 14, 1964 in the wake of his indictment by Das Commission. It was then that the anti-Punjabi Suba front got weakened.

Meanwhile the Akalis revived their demand for Punjabi Suba. The next phase of their agitation began when Sant Fateh Singh decided to go on fast unto death on September 10, 1965 and offered himself for self-immolation on September 25, 1965. In the meantime Pakistan war broke out on September 5, 1965 and the Sant gave up his idea of fast in face of emergency facing the Nation. After the War the Central Government took initiative to resolve the Punjab problem on September 22, 1965. A Cabinet Committee and a Parliamentary Sub-Committee were appointed to tackle the long standing issue of reorganisation of the Punjab.

Punjab Congress had mixed reaction about the Cabinet Committee and Consultative Committee of Parliament. In the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee held on October 1, 1965 it was, however, decided that the demand of Punjabi Suba be opposed.<sup>29</sup>

Bhagwat Dayal submitted a memorandum to the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on behalf of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. In this memorandum it was pleaded that there should be no partition of Punjab on linguistic or any other basis as it would be detrimental to the unity and security of the country and would also be harmful to all sections of the people of Punjab including Sikhs.<sup>30</sup> However this memorandum was not endorsed either by the General Body or the Executive of P.P.C.C. on the ground that this memorandum was never put before the committee for consideration. The Congress Legislative party of the State too could not put a united point of view.<sup>31</sup> It appeared that the Punjab Congressmen were a divided house into several groups. These were :<sup>32</sup>

- (a) those who opposed the partition of Punjab,
- (b) those who supported the demand of Punjabi Suba,
- (c) those who were in favour of a sperate Haryana Prant and
- (d) those who wanted the hilly areas of Punjab to merge with Himachal Pradesh.

29. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

31. Gian Singh Rarewala Papers, File No. 28.

32. Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

Sikh members of the Congress party in Punjab Assembly submitted a memorandum under Giani Kartar Singh.<sup>33</sup> It was emphasised that :

- (a) Punjabi Suba demand i.e., State demarcated on the basis of contiguous areas where the spoken language of the majority of the people is Punjabi be conceded immediately and statutory provisions may be made providing Punjabi as the sole official language of the State.
- (b) The non-Punjabi speaking areas of Punjab may be accommodated according to their wishes as we cannot deny to our those brethern what we demand for ourselves.
- (c) After creating two or three States out of the present Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, a commission may be appointed to go through the question of the adjustment of boundaries on rational basis after consulting the areas concerned.<sup>34</sup>

As regard the Punjab Ministry, the Chief Minister, Com. Ram Kishan, the Home Minister Darbara Singh and the Transport Minister Gurdial Singh Dhillon declared firmly on number of occasions that the Punjab Government had decided Punjab must remain undivided.<sup>35</sup> On October 21, 1965 the Chief Minister declared in a Press Conference that the members of his Cabinet were strongly of the view that Punjab should remain united. By this time Indira Gandhi had become the Prime Minister. She expressed her inclination for the formation of the Punjabi Suba. The opposition group in Congress party charged Indira Gandhi with appeasement of the Akalis while disregarding the majority opinion on the issue of Punjab. Undeterred by these allegations and without waiting for the report by the Cabinet and Consultative Committees, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi got the following resolution passed in a meeting of the Congress Working Committees.<sup>36</sup>

"Out of the existing State of Punjab a State with Punjabi as the

33. Those were as : Harcharan Singh Brar, Gian Singh Rarewala, Kartar Singh, Gyani Gurujaswant Singh, Narain Singh, Lakhi Singh Chaudhri, Pyara Singh, Dalip Singh, Sampuran Singh Dhanaula, Pritam Singh Sahuke, Satnam Singh, Jasdev Singh Sandhu, Prem Singh Lalpura, Bibi Parkash Kaur, Gian Singh Rarewala Papers File No. 387, NAI.

34. This memorandum available in Gian Singh Rarewala papers, NAI.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

36. Satya M. Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

State language be formed. The Government is requested to take necessary steps for the purpose."<sup>37</sup>

Although the Congress was not in favour of the formation of Punjabi Suba. But there were some groups in Congress who supported it, and a majority of M.L.As. from Haryana actively supported the formation of Haryana. In such situation which arose in Punjab the Congress Party could not resist the demand for formation of Punjabi Suba. Thus the State was ultimately reorganised on linguistic basis on November 1, 1966.

37. *The Hindustan Times*, March 10, 1966.

## Revenue System in Kashmir under Afghan Rule till 1819 A.D.

BANDNA SETHI\*

The sources of revenue of medieval Kashmir were not different from those of earlier Hindu rule. The major source of income was the demand on agricultural produce i.e. land revenue. The chief methods of assessment were measurement, appraisement and sharing. The demand in agricultural produce differed during Sultanate period but assumed almost uniformity under Mughal-rule. But the Afghan rulers did not follow any regular system of revenue assessment. The collection from the tiller varying with the amount, the Kardar/Revenue officer had to pay to the emperor.

The first Sultan, Shah Mir, fixed one-sixth of the produce of land, as land revenue.<sup>1</sup> Shah Mir's policy was to rehabilitate the poor and shattered economy of the Valley and also to win the goodwill of the Kashmiris. The later Sultans did increase the State share from time to time but it is also on record that in the event of natural calamities such as flood or failure of crops, famine, epidemic etc. the State could reduce or completely remit the land revenue. For example, during the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin, famine took place and as a result the land revenue was reduced to one-fourth and at some places including Zainagir to one-seventh.<sup>2</sup>

In this illustrious writing 'Tarikh-i-Rashidi', Mirza Haider Dughlat explains considerably the revenue assessment system that the land was divided into four kinds : Firstly, Abi : cultivated by irrigat-

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1. Pandit Jonaraja, *Rajatrangini*, Calcutta and Bombay editions, 1835 and 1875 : Eng. tr. under the title *Kings of Kashmir* by Jogesh Chander Dutt, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1879-88, pp. 1-98.
2. Pandit Srivara, *Jaina-Rajatrangini*, Calcutta, 1835, Eng. tr. by Jogesh Chander Dutt, under the title *Kings of Kashmir* Vol. III, Calcutta, 1935, p. 156.

ion; secondly, land not requiring irrigation but depending on rainfall; thirdly, orchards, and; fourthly, meadows. Assessment on the first category was obviously heavier than on other types. Land revenue was reduced on the land dependant on rainfall for irrigation. Orchards bearing fruit were completely exempted from taxes. The Chak rulers did impose some tax on orchards but it was abolished by Yusuf Shah afterwards. Similarly, the meadow lands were not taxed because no crop was grown on them.

The mode and method of collection of revenue by the Sultans was identical to the system prevailing under the Hindu kings. Each area or village was assessed on Kharwars basis. The cultivators were not allowed to remove the grain from the field till the share of the state was paid. The Government share, collected in kind, was taken to the city, and sold to the residents at fixed prices. This was the best system to control the prices and stop the anti-social elements to indulge in hoarding and creating artificial scarcity. These Sultans and Chaks had levied two more taxes on the people namely, 'baj' and 'tamga'. The *baj* was a type of toll or tax while the *tamga* was a demand in addition to the land revenue. The old tradition in Kashmir considered the whole of the land as the property of the king. Of some portion of the 'Khalsa' land, the rulers divested themselves by grants in *jagirs* for different periods. Although before the annexation of Kashmir by the Mughals, one third has been for a long time past nominal share of the State, yet more than two shares were actually taken.<sup>3</sup>

With the conquest of Kashmir (1585), the Mughal emperor, Akbar the Great, brought an era of expansion, consolidation and construction.<sup>4</sup> Abul Fazal writes that the Subah of Kashmir composed of Kashmir, Pakhli, Bhimber, Swat, Bijore, Qandhar and Zabulistan, with Kabul as its capital. Akbar had left behind indelible marks of genius, as a competent administrator and benevolent ruler. He showed intense activity and interest for the rehabilitation of State. He ordered abolition of 'Jaziya' and relieved the Hindus (only the Brahmins lived then) of humiliation. Mughal army was ordered not

3. Abul Fazal, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Calcutta (Bib. Ind. 1872-73), Eng. tr. H. S. Jarret, III, Calcutta, 1894, p. 397.

4. P. N. Tikoo, *Story of Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 61.

to live in private houses. He further abolished the oppressive system of 'begar.'

Akbar's chief contribution to Kashmir, an agricultural area, is the measurement of land and assessment of revenue which were undertaken immediately after conquest of Kashmir. Akbar had rightly visualized that the welfare and happiness of the poor Kashmiris depend almost entirely on the revenue system and method of taxation. Akbar appointed Khawaja Shamas-ud-Din Khafi and Man Singh to assess the land revenue in the northern districts while Mir Sharif Amuli, Khawaja Mohd. Hussain and Shaikh Faizi were sent to assess the southern districts of Kashmir. State share was fixed as one-third of the autumn produce (*kharif*) i.e. paddy (*shali*). In every village (*mauza*) the assessment was ordered on the basis of the Kharwars (A Kharwar an ass-load, weighs about 178 pounds) of *shali* (paddy) harvested. This demand was made annually without any fresh check or investigation. As regards the spring produce (*Rabi*) such as wheat, pulses, barley etc., the State share for each *patta* of land was ordered at two traks (about 9 seers Indian) of the gross produce. The yearly State revenue was assessed at 22 lakh *kharwars* (352 lakh traks). Measurement of land, in Kashmir, was not calculated by its dimensions, but by the amount of seed each plot required. As such, a kharwar of land comprised a plot of land which required one kharwar load of seeds, which is equal to four British acres. This was also the case with a trak plot or seer plot. A portion or a piece of agricultural land, in the valley, is still called a 'patta' whence the Kashmiris have also got 'chader patta'. It was in practice when Abul Fazal visited Kashmir.<sup>5</sup>

The assessment was never based on facts, and the Governor (*Subedar*) would always conceal the truth. For instance, the Mughal Governor Mirza Yusuf Khan actually realised 33 lakh *kharwars* instead of 22 lakhs, each *kharwar* valued at 28 *dams* instead of 16 *dams* (as already fixed by the Govt.). The Governor defrauded the central Mughal Govt. by 50 per cent. The Governor's own Peshkar, Tota Ram, reported the fraud to the Emperor. Consequently, Akbar commissioned Qazi Ali with Hussain Beg Shaikh Umari as the assistant to Kashmir for proper investigation and settlement. (Hussain Beg is mentioned as Hussain Beg Umri Badkhashani by Badyuni). Thus Qazi Ali divided the entire valley into 40 *parganas*,

5. H. Beveridge, *Akbarnama* (tr.), p. 832.

and assessed the revenue of each in cash and in kind. The number of the local army (militia), cavalry and infantry was also fixed to be posted in each *parganah*.<sup>6</sup> He further decided that the *pattas* (land) held by the soldiery should be resumed and in lieu of that, cash payment be made to them. He finally fixed the valley's State revenue at 30,63,050 *kharwars*, 11 *traks*, out of which 10,15,330 *kharwars* were to be paid in cash. Under the new settlement, the *kharwar* in kind was thus ascertained to be equal to 29 *dams*. However, the Persian writers of Kashmir explain that Qazi Ali grasped huge revenues of Kashmir. Pandit Suka satirically writes that 'the Qazi gave nothing to anyone nor enjoyed anything himself, but he collected a large quantity of gold by robbing others.

On the whole, the new revenue system hit hard the officials of the Governor, the cultivators and the soldiery, because all of them had been in the habit of concealing a sizeable portion from actual produce. They protested stubbornly and planned to revolt (1592) and chose Mirza Hadgar a nephew of Yusuf Khan as their leader. Qazi Ali was killed and Hussain Beg escaped to Rajouri. But they were humbled. The procedure laid down by Akbar continued unchanged till 1819 when Muslim rule ended in the valley. In 1593, Asaf Khan allies Qawan-ud-Din Jafar Beg, the new Governor, gave practical shape to the recommendations of Qazi Ali with some additions and alterations. He reduced the number of the *parganahs* to 38, and further fixed the State revenue at 30,79,443 *kharwars* inclusive of cesses, *baj* and *tamgha*, which amounted to 67,824 *kharwars*, 8 *traks*.<sup>7</sup> Saffron and Shikar (Hunting) were, as usual, made the imperial monopoly. Akbar was so much interested in the welfare and prosperity of the cultivators of the valley that while approving Asaf Khan's proposals in general, on his 2nd visit to Srinagar, he completely remitted the *baj* and *tamgha* taxes which reduced the total revenue to 30,11,618 *kharwars*, eight *traks*, equivalent to 62,11,304 *dams* or 15,52,826 rupees.

It is commonly believed that Todar Mal made a settlement of Kashmir, and, according to the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (VII-93), he made a very summary record. This does not appear to be correct. Todar Mal had died (1589) much before the task of revenue settlement was actually undertaken by Mughal officers under instructions from

6. H. S. Jarret, *Ain-i-Akbari* (tr.), II, pp. 367-70.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 367.

# REVENUE SYSTEM IN KASHMIR

Akbar. Abul Fazal no-where states in the *Ain* or in his historical part of the *Akbarnama* that Todar Mal was ever in Kashmir, or made any settlement of it. However, the truth of the matter, the revenue settlement ordered by Akbar served the best interests of the people, in general, and the land owners and the cultivators, in particular.<sup>8</sup>

The following table shows the amount of land revenue (in Akbarshahi rupees) derived from Kashmir in different years.<sup>9</sup>

Years	Revenue (in Rs)	Sarkars	Mahals
1594 A.D. (Ain)	1,552,826	1	38
1648 A.D.	3,750,000	—	—
1654 A.D.	2,859,750	—	—
1666 A.D. (Bermer)	3,500,000	—	—
1695 A.D. Dashur-ul-Anal	3,157,125	1	46
1697 A.D.	3,505,000	—	—
1700 A.D.	6,947,125	—	—
1720 A.D.	5,320,502	2	75

Under Afghan rule (1753-1819) the administration of Revenue settlement differed particularly in one respect. Normally, the land revenue was farmed out with, indeed, clear instructions from the higher authorities that the Government share of land revenue was to be collected according to the assessment as prevailing under Mughal rule. But it was quite rarely that these instructions were complied with in actual practice. On directions from Afghan Chief to make heavier payments, the revenue farmer (assessor and collector) invariably resorted to irregular, unjust and cruel exactions from the tillers. A British traveller George Forster who visited Kashmir in 1783 A.D. (during Afghan rule) says that a revenue of approximately twenty to thirty lakhs of rupees was collected from the entire valley, of which a tribute of seven lakhs was deposited with the treasury.<sup>10</sup> A portion of this tribute was remitted to the Afghan capital at Kabul in shawl goods.<sup>11</sup> The total revenue collection of Kashmir during Zaman

8. P. N. Tikoo, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

9. P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1962, p. 443.

10. George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England, through the Northern Part of India, Kashmir*, London, 1808, p. 32.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 21.



Shah was<sup>12</sup> :—

The Treasury	Rs. 2,250,000
Taluqdar	Rs. 628,000
Establishment	Rs. 1,140,000
Grand Total	Rs. 4,018,000

On the whole, large majority of the Afghan Governors were fierce tyrants.<sup>13</sup> The revenue was screwed up very high; while the land went out of cultivation, the population thinned and trade and industry went off. Everywhere there was desolation and despair.<sup>14</sup> They treated the Kashmiris as beasts, and the Pathan officials never gave an order 'without first striking the Kashmiris a blow with the back of their axes.'<sup>15</sup> They fleeced them to the bone and ruled like fiends.

Besides the land revenue, other sources of income to the Government comprised numerous taxes, which virtually made Kashmiris a poorer people. 'Zakat' (poor tax) was an important tax which was collected from the Muslims according to the value of their moveable and immovable property. The revenue receipts from this source were heavy there being a religious injunction for the payment of *zakat*. Yusuf Shah abolished *zakat* on boatmen. 'Jaziya' on Hindus was first levied in the reign of Sultan Sikandar. The revenue collection from this source was not much but it was iniquitous and caused annoyance, humiliation and disgrace to the majority community. Zain-ul-Abidin abolished *jaziya* and other discriminatory taxes on the Hindus. Ferry-toll, bridge-toll, duty on imports and exports, tax on arts and crafts (Rasum-e-Hirfa Garan), tax on boatmen and the produce of lakes (Rasum-i-Mir Babri), tax on cattle (*Gawashumari*), tax on trees (*Sar daratkhti*), tax on firewood (Wan-waziri) etc. were other sources of State revenue. Discriminatory Cess on Cremation of the dead (on Hindus) was, later on abolished by Akbar. Demands of sheep from the villagers, poll tax (on trade people) on boatmen, levy of 2 *dams* on fuel and by *baj*

12. These figures and allied information is based on Ghulam Sarwar's Papers preserved in National Archives, New Delhi. He was deputed by the British Government during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Cornwallis, to Afghanistan during 1793-95 A.D.

13. R. K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, p. 398.

14. J. N. Sarkar, *Condition of Kashmir People under Muslim Rule*, Nehru Abhinandhan Granth, New Delhi, 1949, p. 13.

15. *Ibid.*

and *tamga* taxes were additional financial burden on the masses.<sup>16</sup>

The unprincipled, unscrupulous and grasping later Mughal Subedars and Afghan Governors levied new unreasonable taxes on the already heavily tax loaded people of the Kashmir Valley. For instance, Mughal Governor Itiqad Khan (1620-23), for the first time, started the system of 'Begar' for collecting saffron flowers (for the State), imposed tax on fruit trees, and increased current taxes. The cruel Pathan Governor Haji Karim Dad Khan (1776-83), not satisfied with the existing unbearable long list of taxes, further imposed Presentation tax (*Zar-Niaz*), Income tax (*Zar-i-Ashkhas*), Grain-tax (*Zar-i-hubbeh*), Chimney tax (*Zar-i-Dudah*), Shawl tax (*dag shal*) and tax on birdcatchers (*Damdhari*).

Finally, the early Pathan Governors introduced the system of getting tribute and 'Nazrana' from big Zamindars, Jagirdars and feudatory princelings. It was an important source of revenue. Besides Government would also impose was indemnity and special tribute for military expeditions to Panjab or north western provinces of India.

As regards State expenditure, main items involving heavy amount were the army and civil services. The provincial treasury was to foot the bill of the civilians and the soldiery stationed in the province. Mughal Governor Qazi Ali had to face a revolt when he dared reversing the system. All the Pathan Governors continued paying their salaries out of the provincial revenue.

There was considerable expenditure on the Royal household of the Sultan or the Subedar (Governor), pompous court, his courtiers and a large retinue. Normally one-third of State revenue was spent on these items.

As regards financial involvement of the Government, works of public utility and social service such as charitable hospitals, free education, free kitchen for the poor and needy etc. involved considerable amount of State revenue. Construction of buildings and roads, laying out gardens, bridges and traveller's rest houses under orders from Mughal as well as Afghan Governors needed extra budget. Religious endowments like mosques, Khanqahs and poor houses also taxed the State exchequer. Some of the Sultans and Mughal emperors, being lovers and patrons of Art and Literature, granted liberal *jagirs*, pensions, stipends to the intellectuals and artists which also affected the State revenue.

16. H. S. Jarret, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

## Antagonism in Zamindar-Tenant Relation in the South-Eastern Punjab and the Tenancy Act (XVI) of 1887

DIPAK CHATTARAJ\*

The South-Eastern Punjab or the present State of Haryana or the country lying on the western side of the River Jamuna constituted of the districts of Delhi, Gurgaon, Hissar, Karnal, Rohtak and part of Ambala district. These districts except Ambala<sup>1</sup> were annexed to the British Empire in India in 1803 following the conclusion of the Treaty of Sarji Anjangaon (December 30, 1803) and were merged into the North-Western Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh). In the year 1858, just one year later of the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny (1857) these districts were transferred to the province of Punjab. Meanwhile the first regular settlements in most part of this region were made under the Government of the North-Western Provinces. These settlements were expired in or before 1872 and (accordingly) revisions had since been carried out. At the time of revision of the settlement of Sirsa district (Sirsa was a separate district till 1882 and was abolished and divided between Hissar and Ferozepur districts), numerous difficulties arose which led to the formation and enactment of the Tenancy Act (XVI) of 1887.

The district of Sirsa was colonised in the very first decade of the nineteenth century by immigrants from the surrounding Native States under grants of local rulers.<sup>2</sup> The founders and the grantees were, at the first regular settlement (1852), granted proprietary and the tenants who gave active assistance to the founders were recorded

\* 2 Debigarh, P. O. Madhyamgram, Distt. North 24 Pgs—743275 (West Bangal)

1. Till 1809, Ambala was under the control of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and by the Proclamation of 1809 the British district of Ambala gradually grew up.
2. Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue-A, July 1886, Proceedings (Progs.), No. 9.

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as occupancy tenants. However, an occupancy tenant could no longer do according to his will and pleasure with the wasteland because it was handed over as a gift to the proprietary body.<sup>3</sup> The first regular settlement declared that tenants would henceforth have no right to break up the wasteland without the consent of the proprietors. With the development of cultivation and the rise in the value of land the proprietors became aware of their power and asserted their right under the Tenancy Act (XVIII) of 1868. And when a tenant wanted to take more waste he found that the proprietors now interfering and would not let him have it without permission and a higher rate of rent payment.

But during the period of thirty years, from 1852 to 1882, it was found that a considerable number of tenants-at-will had taken land and cleared some 265,000 additional acres of waste :—

TABLE—I

Waste land cleared by tenants-at-will in between 1852 and 1882 in Sirsa District

Cultivated by tenants-at-will in 1882	Area in acres 435, 708
Cultivated by tenants-at-will in 1852	49, 121
	Increase 386, 587
*Deduct occupancy tenures converted to tenures-at-will	121, 776
	Net Increase 264, 811

Source : Minute by Sir C.U. Aitchison, Lieutenant-Governor, Punjab, dated 14th June, 1882, Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue-A, August 1882, Progs. Nos. 33-34.

\*Occupancy-rights had been lost or abandoned in about a fourth of the area in which those rights had been recorded during the first regular settlement.

3. Prior to the commencement of the first regular settlement there was no restriction on the power of individual colonists to break up as much of the waste as they chose, on condition of paying the customary rents and dues on their cultivation, and in practice each cultivator held the land reclaimed by him undisturbed so long as he made these payments. Extract from the Abstract of the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, Legislative Department, June 1886, No. 67.

If the district was not added to the province of Punjab in 1858 and had remained in the North-Western provinces these tenants might have acquired occupancy right in these lands under the Act X of 1859<sup>4</sup> and many of the tenants-at-will, who had held for twelve years, would have become occupancy tenants. But the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1868 had not granted their rights and also forbade the tenants to bring more lands under the plough except the prior consent of the *zamindars*.

The proprietors felt secure under the Tenancy Act of 1868 but when they heard that the settlement would soon be revised, now began to fear that rights of occupancy might be conferred on the tenants of those lands, just as those rights had been granted to the tenants of the lands broken up before 1852.<sup>5</sup> They realised that unless they asserted their rights the same procedure might be followed at the revised settlement as had been adopted at the regular settlement and the tenants might be recorded as having right of occupancy in all the lands cultivated by them.<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, the tenants in the expectation of a grant of occupancy right at the revised settlement refused to pay higher rents which were demanded by the landlords from them since the breaking-up of the waste lands. Consequently, the proprietors issued notices of ejectment in great numbers under Section 23 of the Tenancy Act of 1868.

TABLE—II  
Number of notices of ejectment in between 1876-77 to  
1881-82 in Sirsa district

Year	1876-77	1877-78	1878-79	1879-80	1880-81	1881-82
Number of notice of ejectment under Section-23	540	417	366	1,031	1,189	1,882

Source : Report on the position of Tenants in the Sirsa district, Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue-A, June 1882, Progs. No. 4.

4. Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue-A, June 1882, Progs. No. 4.
5. Punjab Tenancy Act, Statement of Objects and Reasons, Legislative Department, October 1887, Appendix, A-27.
6. Extract from the Abstract of the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, Legislative Department, October 1887, Appendix, A-25.

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The tenants, on the other hand, instituted a large number of suits to establish the right of occupancy.<sup>7</sup> But the result of these suits had not gone in favour of them. The Act in question gave no substantial support to such claims and their claims were in the great majority of cases rejected.<sup>8</sup> In respect of land brought under cultivation after 1868, the tenants were compelled either to leave their lands or to acknowledge themselves as holding at the will of the proprietors as bulk of the suits, decided by the courts, had gone in the favour of the proprietors.

TABLE—III  
Percentage of suits decided in favour of landlords  
and tenants in Sirsa district in between 1876-77  
to 1881-82

Year	1876-77	1877-78	1878-79	1879-80	1880-81	1881-82
Percentage of the stated suit decided in favour of landlords...	35	39	67	77	58	71
Ditto in favour of tenants...	65	61	33	23	42	29
Source : <i>Extracts from Revenue (or Land Revenue) Administration Reports</i> (of local officers found with the Provincial Revenue or Land Revenue Report) for 1875-76 (henceforward ERR), for the respective years.						

The tenant-right controversy had become an increasing phenomenon not only in Sirsa but also in other districts of the south-eastern Punjab, viz., Hissar, Delhi, Rohtak and Gurgaon. In Hissar, the relationship between the landlords and the tenants was cordial as the former, in many cases, entirely depended on the latter for cultivation of their lands. Besides, there were many absentee landlords who left their lands in the hands of the tenants instead of cultivating themselves by any means. Suits for enhancement of rent or institution or ejectment proceedings were almost unknown in

7. For details, see Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue-A, July 1886, Progs. No. 9.

8. *Punjab District Gazetteer, Hissar-1915*, Lahore, 1915, p. 218.

different parts of the district. During the seventies of the nineteenth century the old relationship between the two gradually came to an end. As the value of land as well as of agricultural produce increased, the landlords began to be fully alive to their own interest and enhanced the rates of rent of their tenants.<sup>9</sup> The vast majority of the tenants of Hissar paid cash rents. The rise of the cash rents, on the one hand, affected them severely and on the other, led them to an open contest against the landlords. The landlords, with a view to ejecting them from their holding, issued notices of ejectment. Numbers of notices (of ejectment) under section 23 of the Tenancy Act of 1868 served on the tenants were as follow :—

TABLE—IV  
Number of notices of ejectment in Hissar district  
in between 1875-76 to 1881-82

Year	1875-76	1876-77	1877-78	1878-79	1879-80	1880-81	1881-82
No. of Notices of ejectment	298	474	428	606	1,347	3,116	3,213

Source : *Annual Report of the Revenue (or Land Revenue) Administration of the Punjab (henceforth Revenue Report) for the respective years.*

These figures also indicate that the number of notices of ejectment did not increase at an alarming rate till the approaching date of expiry of the first regular settlements. But with the beginning of the revision of the settlements, they rose in great numbers. It happened owing to the increasing apprehension of the landlords who ought to think that the tenants might claim a superior status from the length of possession in the revised settlement.<sup>10</sup> In other words, they again were anxious in facing the extensive grant of occupancy right of the days of the first regular settlement. It is important to note that their intention was not to dispossess the tenants of the holdings, but to compel them to pay enhanced rent and to prevent acquisition of occupancy right,<sup>11</sup> or, to establish their status as one without right of occupancy.

9. *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Hissar District, 1887-92*, Lahore, 1892, p. 57.

10. Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue-A, August 1882, Progs. Nos. 33-34; *ERR for 1879-80*, p. 16; *ERR for 1880-81*, p. 23.

11. *Report on the Revised Settlement Report of the Hissar District, 1887-92*, p. 57.

In Delhi and Rohtak, the enhanced rates of rent embittered the relations between the landlords and the tenants. The tenants of these districts paid nothing but revenue demand of the Government and nominal fees of *malikana* of the landlords. In certain cases they very often paid the revenue demand. For instance, in Delhi, there was at least 33,890 holdings of this kind;<sup>12</sup> in Rohtak such holdings were great in number.<sup>13</sup> In the changing circumstances the landlords were no longer satisfied with the existing rate and they began to increase it. When the tenants refused to pay the new one they instituted notices of ejectment. In 1875-76, number of notices were served against the tenants, in Delhi, was 359, and in Rohtak, 302.<sup>14</sup> Later on, especially at the approaching termination of the first regular settlements, the suits increased rapidly. According to a British settlement officer, there was hardly a single tenant who would escape from having to pay higher rate of rent.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, in Rohtak district a peculiar problem in regard to tenant rights had come into entity. The proprietor of certain villages faced a great difficulty in realising the fixed rent (including the revenue demand of the Government) from their tenants, having rights of occupancy who were also the proprietors and influential men of the adjacent villages.<sup>16</sup> The settlement officials as well as the District Officers were in favour of the proprietors and encouraged them to file suits on these tenants. As a result, there were nearly 500 suits of enhancement of rent which contributed much to exasperate the relationship between the two.

The tenancy problem assumed a great magnitude in the district of Gurgaon also. Here, the tenants, like the tenants of the adjoining districts, paid the revenue demand and cesses at a customary rate. The landlords, in the seventies of the nineteenth century, did not agree to accept the prevailing one as a result of the increased revenue demand of the Government and the transforming situations of the

12. *Final Report on the Settlement of Land Revenue in the Delhi District; 1872-80*, Lahore, 1882, p. 78; Extract from Abstract of the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, Legislative Department, October 1887, Appendix, A-35.

13. Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue-A, May 1885, Progs. No. 20.

14. *ERR for 1875-76*, p. 34.

15. *ERR for 1877-78*, p. 15.

16. For details, see *ERR for 1878-79*, 'Tenant Rights in Rohtak,' p. 6.



time, and became too active to enhance the rate of rent.<sup>17</sup> According to the Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon, the landlords of Palwal insisted on a higher rate because the value of land in this tahsil arose high immediately after the construction of the Agra Canal.<sup>18</sup> Needless to say that, the struggle between the landlords and tenants had accordingly risen. In consequence, the landlords were attempting to eject as many old tenants paying at customary rents as they could in order to lease their lands to new tenants at higher rents.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in 1875-76 Gurgaon occupied the first place of the south-eastern Punjab districts regarding the number of notices of ejectment instituted by the landlords :—

TABLE—V  
Number of notices of ejectment in south-eastern Punjab districts

Year	Name of the district	Number of suits
1875-76	Gurgaon	559
"	Sirsa	395
"	Delhi	359
"	Rohtak	302
"	Hissar	298

Source : *ERR for 1875-76*, p. 34.

At that time there was a general disposition on the part of the tenants to challenge the ejectment proceedings of the landlords. In the subsequent years when the landlords pursued the same policy as before the tenants, finding no other way, were compelled to pay the higher rate of rent. However, like Hissar and Sirsa the number of suits in Gurgaon did not increase considerably; e.g., in 1878-79, 1879-80 and 1880-81 the numbers were 762, 556 and 447 respectively. But this did not mean that the struggle between the landlords and the tenants had ceased to exist; on the contrary, the atmosphere of antagonism was continued uninterruptedly till the passing of the Tenancy Act of 1887.

These state of things attracted the attention of the Government of Punjab as well as the Government of India. The latter considered

17. *Land Revenue Settlement of the Gurgaon District*, Lahore, 1882, p. 71.

18. *ERR for 1875-76*, p. 34.

19. *Revenue Report for 1875-76*, p. 15.

20. *Revenue Report for 1877-78*, p. 15 ; *Revenue Report for 1880-81*, p. 23.

that a case for amending it in the tenant's favour to be made out, and asked the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab to consider the matter. The Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Sir Charles Aitchison submitted the proposals of the Punjab Government to amend the Tenancy Act and asked that a bill might be introduced into the Legislative Council without delay.

According to the instructions of the Government of India, the Financial Commissioner, J. B. Lyall, prepared a draft bill amending the Tenancy Act of 1868. The main features of the bill were six<sup>21</sup> :—

- (1) the omission of the word heretofore from section 5, clause (1) of the Act (Section 4, sub-section (1), clause (a) of the Bill);
- (2) original settlers were placed in as good a position with reference to occupancy-right as successors of original settlers;
- (3) the present scale fixed for the enhancement and reduction of the rents of occupancy-tenants had been adjusted with reference to the land revenue (section 15 to 17);
- (4) power had been restored to settlement-officers to fix the rents of the occupancy tenants at the time of the assessment of the land revenue (section 10);
- (5) the provisions for the payment of compensation for improvements has been made more liberal (chapter VI); and,
- (6) provision has been made for the compensation of reclaiming and clearing tenants on their ejection from the lands which they had brought under cultivation (section 47).

After considerable discussion and correspondence (with the Government of India) a measure was introduced into the Legislative Council in the month of June 1886, and finally a revised Bill was passed into law as Act XVI of 1887 and received the assent of the Governor-General in Council on the day of 23rd September, 1887.

The object of the new Tenancy Act was only to remove legal difficulties, and to provide for acknowledged specific cases of hardship, and to complete the provisions needed on a variety of matter which the old and more roughly cast Act of 1868 had left undetermined.<sup>22</sup> When the Act was put into effect the tenancy problems of south-

21. The New Tenancy Act, 1887, Legislative Department, October 1887, Appendix, A-27.

22. B. H. Badenpowell, *The Land Systems of British India*, Vol. II, p. 712.

eastern Punjab districts as well as of the other districts of Punjab were settled under the provisions of this New Act. For example, in the year 1889, 6,408 suits for rent enhancements were decided out of which decrees of enhancement were given in 6,241 cases and the rent of 14,423 holdings of cultivators with occupancy rights were fixed by these decrees; their rate of enhancement varied from one *anna* to twelve *annas* per rupee.<sup>23</sup>

Evidently, after the enactment of the new Tenancy Act the rates of rent had arisen steadily in almost all Delhi districts. In Rohtak district, cash rents rose from 4 to 8 to 12 *annas* to Rs. 1-2-0 per acre, and rents in kind, from one fourth to one third for *barani* (unirrigated land) and from one third to one half for *chahi* (irrigated from well) and *nahri* (irrigated from canal).<sup>24</sup> In Hissar, rents in cash increased from Rs. 1-1-7 per acre to Rs. 2-12-0 for irrigated land.<sup>25</sup> This process of enhancement, on the one hand, hit very hard the tenants of Rohtak and Hissar districts, and on the other, it brought a great change in the position of the tenants of Ambala district who were not affected by the Tenancy Act of 1868. Out of the total 72,500 acres then (the late eighties of nineteenth century) cultivated with occupancy right little over 20,000 acres paid rents in kind; from 9,000 to 10,000 acres paid revenue demand without cesses and the remaining 43,000 acres paid rents in cash with an addition of nominal *malikana*.<sup>26</sup> Bulk of the last group would not possess any privileged status under both the Tenancy Acts (of 1868 and 1887) and hence they became liable to enhancement of rent upto 75 percent of the revenue in addition to Government dues.

The Government of India considered to make amendment in the favour of the tenants but there was no change in the principle of the tenant right in the Act of 1887; it therefore remained the same as it was before (in the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1868). The Act imposed no restrictions over the landlords in regard to ejectment proceedings.

23. H. Banerjee, *Agrarian Society of the Punjab, 1849-1901*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 155.

24. Remarkd by Captain P. Burton, Deputy Commissioner, Rohtak, *ERR for 1897-98*, p. 39.

25. Remarkd by P. D. Agnew, Deputy Commissioner, Hissar, *ERR for 1897-98*, p. 39.

26. *Punjab District Gazetteer, Ambala-1923-24*, Lahore, 1925, p. 95; *Settlement Report of the Ambala District, 1893*, Lahore, 1893, p. 79.

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They were very much active to eject the tenants without right of occupancy from their holding under the provisions of the Act as the following figures show :—

TABLE—VI  
Ejection proceedings in Rohtak under the  
Tenancy Act of 1887

Numbers of Notices Issued	1921-22	1922-23
1	2	3
Numbers of Applications under Section 43, 42 (b)	841	1,911
Number of Notices issued under Section 45 (1)	1,710	2,081
Number of cases ejection actually made under order of process or a Revenue Court of Officer	184	523

Source : *Revenue Report* for the respective years.

Even the Act of 1887 could not save the occupancy tenants from the case for enhancement of rates of rents. There were many law suits (for enhancement of rents) in the south-eastern Punjab districts which were registered in the period mentioned above. Thus we may safely conclude that more and more competition, tension, bitterness, ill-blood and antagonism were the controllers of the relationship between the *zamindars* and tenants even after the enforcement of the Tenancy Act of 1887. Tenancy problem was still a burning question which ultimately led to tenant movements in Chhuchak—was (Rohtak), Skinner's estate (Hissar), Ingram estate (Gurgaon) and village Talao (Rohtak).

## The Colonial State, Agrarian Policy and Peasant Response in Punjab During Nineteenth Century

KAMLESH MOHAN\*

In this paper, I want to develop the argument that some kind of relationship existed between the colonial state<sup>1</sup> and response of its subject people and their strategy which ranged from constitutional methods of appeals, petitions, boycott and agitation to revolutionary warfare as demanded by the ongoing anti-imperialist struggle for freedom.<sup>2</sup> The essential issue for discussion is how the colonial state

- 
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This paper was originally presented in the 51st Session of Indian History Congress held at Calcutta in 1990.
  - 1. The colonial state's presence remained dominant in Punjab which had no legislative council upto 1897. The Legislative Council, which had eight members including four non-officials, nominated by the Lieutenant-Governor, formed as much a 'department' of administration as any other. Set up under the provisions of the Indian Councils Act of 1861, its functions were not enlarged under the Councils Act of 1862. The Council could only consider proposals for legislation and discuss the financial statement. The Imperial Legislative Council could still make laws regarding all matters concerning Punjab and it did so in practice. For example, Punjab Alienation of Land Act 1900 was passed by the Imperial Legislative Council. Even in the limited field, it was allowed to operate, the approval of the Government of India was necessary for all its legislative proposals. A full control over the administrative and legal set up of Punjab was extremely essential in view of its crucial importance for the solvency and military security of the colonial state. The main objective of the close-fisted and graded hierarchy of Punjab administration was to further the process of social transformation and to bring Punjab in line with more developed provinces of British India.
  - 2. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison-Note Books*, trans. & ed., Quentin Hoare and G. Nowell Smith (First Published 1971), Reprinted, London: 1979, pp. 229-30.

(its structure and functioning) and its agrarian policies, primarily dictated by the overarching goal of economic exploitation to feed the industrial revolution in England, fostered such conditions as led to the transformation of an apathetic, subdued and loyal people (who had saved the *raj* in the armed struggle of 1857-59 by offering their voluntary support in the form of logistics and manpower)<sup>3</sup> into highly motivated and militant soldiers of the Indian struggle for freedom. For a clear exposition of my argument, I shall divide this paper into three sections. Section I analyses the self-image of the British *raj*, law and the ruled. Section II discusses the fashioning of the new state structure and its functioning. Section III discusses the implementation of British agrarian policy and peasant response. Section IV sums up the discussion.

# I

## Self-Image of the British Raj, Law and the Ruled

The self-image of the *raj* had partly been moulded by a number of assumptions about the potential threat from a high spirited and martial local population and the border tribes, and partly by the early British administrations' perception of their role in the newly annexed Punjab and their attitude towards the ruled. The British officers had projected themselves as saviours of the *raj* from the cataclysm of 1857. Imbued with imperial consciousness, they pursued their mission "to subdue, administer, convert and improve without halting and without question".<sup>4</sup> Sense of Angrezi Dharma provided justification and direction to the functionaries of the British *raj*. Above all, these officers were keen to carve their image as decisive, strong and efficient but sensitive, fair and accessible to people.

Legitimacy of their rule was the vital 'concern' of the British.<sup>5</sup> Firstly, in order to legitimize their authority, the colonial state was obliged to cultivate goodwill and support of those institutions, social groups, religious elites, landed-aristocracy, *jagirdars*, prominent

3. For the role of the Sikhs in the reconquest and rehabilitation of Delhi after the 'mutiny' of 1857, see Dolores Domin, *India in 1857-59: A study in the Role of the Sikhs on the People's Uprising*, Berlin, 1977.

4. Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharma: Hindu-Consciousness in the 19th century Punjab*, Delhi, 1977, p. 12.

5. For a well-argued exposition of the British strategy of cultivating the support of influential social groups See Jan Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947*, Delhi, 1988, pp. 48-64.

families and war-like tribes, whose help was regarded vital for political control. This major compulsion of the imperial authority was highlighted in a document on "social and political intercourse with Punjabis" distributed amongst young officers.<sup>6</sup> Loyalty and trust of the more numerous small peasantry was even more crucial for the expanding British empire because its willingness to pay maximum land revenue and to furnish large number of recruits only could ensure the solvency and military security of the *raj*.

Secondly, law constituted the most significant basis of legitimacy to colonial officials<sup>7</sup>. That was why the writings of the spokesmen of the *raj* and even its functionaries are replete with the advocacy of extension of 'rule of law' to the each territorial constituent of the British empire in India<sup>8</sup>. It was argued that the definition and codification of the law was central to the process of legitimization of colonial state's policies. For example, the Punjab settlements from 1846 to 1870, which had been undertaken without 'legal sanction', were formalised by the Land Revenue Act 1871. With the finalisation of assessment procedures under the Land Revenue Act 1887, appropriation of land-revenue, forests or natural resources became a lawful right of the colonial state.<sup>9</sup> Besides, the utilitarians had assigned law a valuable role in the modernisation of despotic and oriental societies, particularly, India.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of recurrent emphasis on the manifold uses of law, occasional display of coercive power and repressive power of the state

6. Reprinted in N. G. Barrier, "How to Rule India", *The Panjab Past and Present* No. V, 1971, pp. 276-96.

7. *U. K. Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. III, 28 March, 1892 pp. 63-68. As a member of Parliament, Lord Curzon had insisted that English rule rested upon the contentment of the "real" people of India, the cultivating classes.

8. A number of writings on law in colonial India have appeared in 1970s and '80s. For example see J. D. M. Derrett, *Essays in Classical and Modern Hindu Law*, Vol. II, London, 1977. Also D. A. Washbrook, "Law, State, and Agrarian Society in Colonial India", *Modern Asia Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1981.

9. Fitzjames Stephen, "Legislation Under Lord Mayo," in W. W. Hunter, *A Life of Lord Mayo*, London, 1875, pp. 143-226. Hunter's footnote recorded that this chapter was actually a letter from Stephen to him. It was retained in its original shape.

10. For a brilliant exposition of utilitarian's views on law see Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians in India* (First Published 1959), Reprinted, Delhi, 1982, pp. 44-45.

was deemed essential for keeping alive the myth of the mighty British empire in the minds of its subjects<sup>11</sup>. However, it was punctuated by gestures of goodwill and sympathy in order to establish its image as a benevolent public authority. Undoubtedly, the Indian society as a whole had submitted to the imperial authority, its laws and codes, regulating social relations, property ownership, eviction suits and exchange relations. However, they had not accepted the intellectual and moral leadership of their colonial masters. Conscious of this lacunae in their citadel of power, particularly, its liberal spokesmen such as Charles Grant and Lord Macaulay underlined the urgency of buttressing their conquest by goodwill and support of the people. In their view this could be done through the introduction of English education.<sup>12</sup>

While developing the idea of conquest over mind, Charles Trevelyan went to the extent of assigning an interventionist role to the colonial policy which could lead India either to the path of reform or revolution. In his view, the most effective strategy was the inculcation of colonial mentality among Indians. That was why the British *raj*, without reducing the quantum of colonial exploitation, had concentrated on the dissemination of colonial ideology through the introduction and spread of western learning and institutions.<sup>13</sup> Such a step created new pockets of vested interests in the perpetuation of the *raj* as well as trained an army of western-educated Indians for fulfilling the requirements of the expanding administrative apparatus of the colonial state. The most brilliant product of the process of European improvement was the new Indian intelligentsia who rose on the crest of 'renaissance' in Bengal. In spite of their awareness of the contradiction of interests and goals between British imperialists and Indian nationalists, they had endorsed the 'civilizing mission' of

11. Bipin Chandra, 'Colonialism, Stages of Colonialism and the Colonial State', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1980. Also Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, "Notes on the Role of the Intelligentsia in Colonial Society: India from Mid-Nineteenth Century", *Studies in History*, Vol. I, No. I, 1979.

12. For "Charles Grant's Observations, 1797 and Macaulay's Minute's 1835". See M. R. Paranjape ed., *A Source Book of Modern Indian Education*, London, 1938.

13. For a synoptic view of the ideas of Charles Trevelyan see B. D. Basu, *History of Education Under the Rule of the East India Company*, Reprinted, Delhi, 1989, p. 62.



England.<sup>14</sup> Their ambivalent attitude was characteristic of the colonial consciousness,<sup>15</sup> both at the urban and rural level. Perhaps unwittingly, this reinforced the British efforts to create an illusion of permanence of the *raj*.

Was this illusion of permanence and legitimacy of the colonial state justified in view of the slow but irreversible crystallisation of anti-imperialist sentiments and revolutionary consciousness of the peasantry, mediated by the intelligentsia in Punjab? The answer is no. A curious mix of authoritarian, paternal and democratic element, the initial policy of the colonial administration in Punjab appeared "to guarantee a strong, simple, paternal rule, devoted to the welfare of a society of sturdy peasant-proprietors".<sup>16</sup> However, as the ensuing discussion would show that chiefs and jagirdars were wooed, once again, after 1857 revolt, as powerful allies of the *raj*, but the peasant-proprietors were gradually relegated to background because they had no social influence and thus no political weightage. For a proper understanding of the role of the state in driving the peasant to rebellion, an analysis of the new state structure and its functioning is relevant,

## II

### Colonial State-Structure and its Functioning in Punjab :

The British rulers, while fashioning a new state structure for Punjab after the absorption of the Lahore Kingdom into the empire in 1849, were faced with a three-fold task : (i) to convert "the sullen and bitter resignation of the vanquished into honest, contended and hearty loyalty"<sup>17</sup> (ii) infusion of the elements of civilized administration (iii) to convert Punjab into not only "a secure but

14. For a historiographic evaluation of 'renaissance' in Bengal see V. C. Joshi ed. *Ram Mohan Roy and the Process of Modernization in India*, New Delhi, 1975.

15. Sudhir Chandra, 'Literature and Colonial Consciousness', paper presented at the seminar on *Social Transformation and Creative Imagination*, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, 1983. Sudhir Chandra argued that 'ambivalence' was not the product of pragmatic considerations but an integral part of the colonial consciousness.

16. Eric Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

17. Charles Gough and Arthur D. Innes, *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars* (First published 1897), Delhi, 1984, p. 222.

also profitable possession".<sup>18</sup> In order to execute this three-fold programme efficiently, economically and vigorously, Lord Dalhousie devised his own expedient, almost unique but temporary model, designated as the Board of Administration,<sup>19</sup> which would function under the non-Regulation System.<sup>20</sup>

The Punjab Government, which drew at least half of its corps of administrators from civil service was military in form and spirit. Control over officers was achieved through the application of the Benthamite principles of personal responsibility, accountability and inspectability.<sup>21</sup> A rigid system of recording, and reporting and collection of all kinds of statistics (which facilitated the compilation of information-packed document like Punjab Administration Reports), was also enforced in addition to the personal control exercised through the military chain of commandment. The result was an autocratic rule which could be easily grafted on the

18. Foreign Department, Despatch No. 20, 7 April 1849-Governor-General Lord Dalhousie to Secret Committee. See also Edwin Arnold, *The Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration of British India* in 2 Vols., Vol. I, London, 1862, p. 325.
19. For a detailed study of the achievements of Board of Administration in Punjab see N. M. Khilnani, *British Power in the Punjab 1839-1958*, Bombay, 1972, pp. 157-197. See also Eric Stokes, n. 10, pp. 243-8. The Board of Administration (1849-53), which had laid the foundations of the Punjab System, functioned on the principle of centralisation of judicial, fiscal and magisterial powers in the hands of each civil functionary from the Board to the *Kardar*. The military criteria of a single unified command was observed in the appointment of one officer for one territorial unit. That was why each of the seven divisions of Punjab was put under the charge of one Commissioner and each of its twenty-seven districts under a separate Deputy Commissioner each. For a useful comments on Punjab system see M. Naides, "John Lawrence and the Origins of the Punjab system 1849-75," *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. LXXXI, No. 1, 1961.
20. For detailed information see D. G. Barkley, *The Non-Regulation Law of the Punjab: Being a Collection of Rules, Laws or Regulations Made for the Province under the Punjab Administration* (Lahore: Superintendent Government Press, 1871). Already in use in the Central Provinces, Oudh and lower Burma, this system acquired a certain aggressive quality in the hands of John Lawrence, who had been trained to operate a unitary structure of state under Metcalfe in Delhi. In fact, the modified form of this system had been introduced in Punjab to speed up the process of transforming Punjab into a model colony while keeping down the expenditure on its administration.
21. Eric Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

feudal system of the former Sikh State. The colonial state also incorporated such elements of customary laws and institutions in the structure of imperial authority<sup>22</sup> and to the extent as were compatible with the general line of bourgeois policy.<sup>23</sup> The retention of the institution of panchayat was one such example.

The authoritarian element in the Punjab system was further strengthened by the implementation of Dalhousie's policy of weakening the aristocracy, implying reduction in the feudal incomes as far as political considerations permitted.<sup>24</sup> With the abolition of Board of Administration and the removal of its President Henry Lawrence, John Lawrence as the Chief Commissioner of Punjab was empowered to strike a decisive blow at the landed-aristocracy. By appropriating their right to collect land revenue including their rental-share, the colonial state could act as a despot without any strong rival centres of power and as the supreme landlord without any co-sharer in enormous benefits. Thus, the Punjab system had imposed "the framework of a civilized state upon a bewildered peasantry"<sup>25</sup> in an authoritarian though energetic manner.

In spite of the authoritarian style of administration, the Punjab Government's policy of light taxation in 1850s<sup>26</sup> and the

22. For a well-argued account of the colonial state's use of customary law and social traditions for constructing a distinctive body of law and structure of imperial authority in India. See David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 11-38

23. Eric Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

24. For an analytical account of the British policy towards feudal forces see Dolores Domin, n. 3, pp. 70-98.

25. Eric Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

26. According to the calculations of Dolores Domin, no. 3, p. 63, the Punjab peasant paid the lowest land-revenue per head in mid 1850s out of the temporarily settled parts of British India. For illustration see the following table:

Land-tax per head of the agricultural population in British India in 1855:

Province	Incidence per head/of land tax			Rs.
	R	A	P	
Punjab	1	2	10	(1.34)
North Western Provinces (N.W.U.P.)	1	5	5	(1.65)
Bombay	1	8	1	(1.97)
Bengal	0	8	1	(0.97)

In Bengal, the permanently fixed land-tax did not include the amount of rent, which was extracted from the tenants by Zamindars in addition to the official demand indicated in the table given above.

occasional projection of its sympathy and goodwill for the peasantry such as relief measures, remission or suspension of land revenue during short-term crisis of famines, drought and epidemic,<sup>27</sup> won the active support of peasants-turned-soldiers in saving the empire from the cataclysm of 1857.<sup>28</sup> Ironically, at this moment of glory the Punjab School of administration, began the process of dismantling not only the rule of personal discretion and unified structure of power but also of replacing 'indistinct, ill-understood and fluctuating customs by the rule of law'. The paternalist form of rule was no longer needed once the property rights had been defined and land revenue fixed in cash. In fact, ancient village communities, the core of the Punjab system, were regarded as "unfavourable to the growth of wealth, intelligence, political experience and the moral and intellectual changes", required for transforming India into a modern commercial society.<sup>29</sup> Thus, a fierce controversy raged between the paternalists and legalists<sup>30</sup> and it was resolved by Fitzjames Stephen.

27. Proceedings of Land Revenue & Agriculture (Famine, April 1898, A. Nos, 30-37, pp. iii, 28. Famine relief measures (introduced after 1880s). Usually failed to save people from starvation and death on account of colonial state's reluctance to pronounce the existence of famine conditions in the country and take timely action. However, the district officials were anxious to monitor the positive response of the peasantry to the 'relief' measures, in order to reassure themselves about the success of the policy. For example, D. Smith, the Deputy Commissioner of Hissar, had pointed out that their efforts had been 'amply rewarded' because these had strengthened the bond of sympathy, between the *sarkar* and the rural people. The Deputy Commissioner had also reported about the feelings of intense gratitude among the people.
28. As a reward for its spectacular hold and loyalty in times of crisis for the *raj*, Punjab was raised to the status of a Lieutenant Governor's province in October, 1858, and John Lawrence became the first incumbent of this office. This model province also gained more territory with the transfer of Delhi from North Western Provinces of Punjab. By reproducing the Punjab pattern of the centralised administration and 'simple scientific judicial laws', John Lawrence had scored another quick victory for authoritarian reform.
29. Minutes of H.S. Maine, 27 February and 3 March 1868. Cited in Erick Stokes, n. 12. pp. 271-2.
30. The paternalists were led by John Lawrence, the Governor-General and Viceroy (1864-1869) and the forceful lobby of legalists was headed by Henry Maine.

Perceiving no contradiction between the strong paternal Government and the "rule of law", Fitzjames Stephen argued that laws, being orders and articles of war, would improve efficiency of the Deputy Commissioners<sup>31</sup> who had the duty to rule a turbulent and primitive people. The extension of 'rule of law' to the Non-Regulation provinces would also legitimize the executive action and prescribe limits of safety for the functionaries of the colonial state.<sup>32</sup> Armed with this deep conviction in the 'civilizing mission' of law, Stephen expedited the completion of the system of codes generally applicable to the whole of India. He also reduced to formal law those subjects hitherto left largely under the direction of administrative orders. For example, in 1871, Punjab Land Revenue Act was passed to be followed by a series of laws and codes<sup>33</sup> for bringing cosmetic changes in the centralised structure and authoritarian functioning of the Punjab Government.

After the revolt of 1857, the state had also used law to reinforce the position of the landed-aristocracy after reassessing their political and economic weightage in the long-term colonial and imperialist goals and policies in India. That was why the Punjab Tenancy Acts of 1868 and 1887 were passed. Targetting at checking the growth of occupancy tenants, these two measures led to a fast conversion of peasant-proprietors into tenants-at-will<sup>34</sup> and agricultural labourers but to the economic advantage of the feudal classes. To add to the hold of landed-aristocracy over the peasants, feudal chiefs were given magisterial, revenue and police powers. In the capacity of Honorary Magistrates, these Jagirdars, invested with the

31. Minute by J. Fitzjames Stephen on the Administration of justice in British India in the *Selection from the Records of the Government of India*. Cited in Eric Stokes, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

32. J. Fitzjames Stephen, "Legislation under Lord Mayo" in W.W. Hunter, n.9.

33. The Criminal Procedure Code was extended to Punjab in 1861, the Penal Code already prevalent in many parts of British India, was applied in 1862. With the establishment of Special Courts for civil suits in 1865, and the Chief Court at Lahore, in 1866, the Punjab Government had acquired a full-fledged machinery for handling cases of civil justice, including rental suits.

34. Sukhwant Singh, "Agricultural Development in the Punjab 1849-1946", Unpublished M. Phil. Dissertation, G.N.D.U. Amritsar, 1979, p. 191. Between 1872-73 and 1902-03, the number of tenants-at-will had increased by 360 percent.

special powers of Assistant Commissioners in Criminal and revenue cases (below Rs. 300/-), regained their power to exploit peasantry.<sup>35</sup>

### III

#### Agrarian Policy and Peasant Response

Owing to constraints of space, I have focussed my discussion on such issues/measures of the British agrarian policy as agitated the peasantry and alerted the top-brass of the colonial state and a few key functionaries in the Punjab Government regarding dangers from a disgruntled peasantry to the political stability of the *raj* and its economic stake in India. One such issue was the state revenue-demand and the second was the rural indebtedness leading to land-alienation.

In the early period of British revenue settlements beginning with summary settlements in Jullundur (1845), high pitched revenue demand and its rigorous collection on a rigid schedule (without any concession for the weak financial position of the peasants or for crop failures owing to natural calamities) created friction between the state and the high-spirited peasantry. *The Punjab Administration Report 1851-52* conceded that the militancy of Punjab peasantry, who preferred to abandon their lands rather than accept oppressive terms and high state-demand, had noticeable impact on the shaping of the early revenue policy.<sup>36</sup> As a result of peasantry's effective 'intervention' in the colonialization of Punjab economy, the assessment terms were lowered and the final loss was compensated through confiscations and resumptions of *jagirs* in Multan province where warlike Muslim peasantry lived.<sup>37</sup>

The lasting impact of this 'social intervention' was visible in the Regular Settlements<sup>38</sup> which were based on the principle of 'light assessment'. Dannis Fitzpatrick, while explaining the essential purpose underlying the agrarian policy in Punjab observed that low taxes and rule of law would ensure peace and contentment under

35. Dolores Domin, n. 3.

36. *Punjab Administration Report 1851-52*, p. 145.

37. *Ibid.*, 1849-50 and 1850-51, pp. 93 ff.

38. For a detailed discussion of the development of settlement policy in Punjab from 1846-1897, see J.M. Douis, ed. *Punjab Settlement Manual* (First published 1899, Reprinted, Delhi, 1985, pp. 24-43.

British rule.<sup>39</sup>

The problem of rural indebtedness was the second major issue which evoked an aggressive response from the peasantry. It was evident from the reports of looting, arson and attack upon rich Hindu money-lenders by the numerically dominant but poor Muslim Zamindars from the warlike tribes in west Punjab. From 1880s onwards, S.S. Thorburn's Minutes and publications had drawn official attention to steady impoverishment of peasantry owing to the exhaustion of their meagre resources in fulfilling heavy debt obligations and expropriation of their lands by the *sahukar*.<sup>40</sup> His ominous observation, endorsed by the reports of Deputy Commissioners of Gurdaspur, Muzafargarh, Shahpur and Ambala about the large scale sale or mortgage of land,<sup>41</sup> forced the British rulers to review their policy of *laissez faire*, only fit for highly industrialized western societies.

After a prolonged debate between the advocates of policy of non-interference in economic competition in rural society and paternal protection of 'irresponsible' peasant proprietors, the Punjab Alienation of Land Act 1900 was passed.<sup>42</sup> The crucial consideration underlying this legislation (restricting peasant's right to sell or mortgage) was to avert the imminent 'political danger' of widespread anti-government disturbances throughout Punjab, signalled by the "animosity of the agricultural classes" directed mainly against the Hindu money-lenders. It was a protest of the premobilised peasantry, whose socio-economic behaviour was undergoing the process of fermentation in the nineteenth century.

39. Note by Dannis Fitzpatrick dated 23.9.1893, published in *Report of Royal Commission on Public Services in India* Vol. X (contains evidences of officials and non-officials), p. 330.

40. Minute by S. S. Thorburn entitled, "Indebtedness of Mohammedan Population of Dera Ismail Khan" in *Judicial Proceedings, Government of India*, Nos. 252-544 A, October 1885, p. 3. See also S. S. Thorburn, *Musalman and Money-lenders in Punjab* (First published 1886, Reprinted Patiala, Punjab Language Department).

41. *Selections of papers on Agricultural Indebtedness* (Revenue and Agriculture Deptt., Government of India), Vol. II. See also Shyamla Bhatia, *Social Change and Politics in Punjab 1898-1910* (New Delhi: Enkay Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 1987) pp. 228-231.

42. For an analytical discussion of two opposit view points on legislation for restriction of peasant's right to sell or mortgage see Norman G. Barrier, "The Formulation and Enactment of the Punjab Alienation of Land Bill", "The Panjab Past and Present", Vol. XIII-I, April 1979, pp. 193-215.

## IV

**Conclusion**

By using the procedure which W. H. Walsh has described as "colligation", I have tried to highlight two points; (i) the role of the colonial state—its unified structure and aggressive-cum-paternalizing style of functioning in reactivating the subdued militancy of the high spirited Punjabis especially peasantry; (ii) impact of the militant 'intervention' of peasantry on the form of implementation of agrarian policies in Punjab.

While attempting multiple changes ranging from revenue settlements to social engineering for colonial exploitation of India, the State had intensified the Punjabi cultivator's predilections for violence. The provocation to his 'martial traits' was the strongest in the central Punjab where the world economic forces mediated by colonialism had the greatest affect in 1860s and 1870s. Hard-pressed between the relentless state revenue-demand in cash and the oppressive burden of indebtedness, the peasantry grew increasingly poor, discontented, and desperate. Even for the resourceful and enterprising peasant-proprietors in the Central Punjab, who managed to save their land, from eviction or expropriation by utilizing their income from employment abroad for meeting revenue demand or debt payment, the struggle for existence became nerve-racking. These premobilised masses, who had no incentive for remaining loyal, were the potential recruits in the first large scale agrarian unrest-reinforced by the urban democratic intelligentsia.

Secondly, the militancy of Punjabi peasantry possessed a certain amount of autonomy. Nurtured on the egalitarian values of *Jat* society and memories of a tradition of organised protest against state oppression and injustice of the ruling classes under Mughal rule, the peasants expressed their discontent through threats to migrate if their demands were not conceded.

It may be argued that the intensity of militancy of peasantry in the 19th century was born out of the triangular synopsis between the material conditions created by the colonial rule, peasant consciousness of shared grievances and a sense of their historical mission to fight for justice and a righteous cause. But it had yet to acquire anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist stance in the twentieth century.



## Nature and Concept of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Administration of Kashmir

HARMEET SETHI\*

The extent of the area of Kashmir that was under the Sikhs was limited to the valley proper, viz., from Verinag in the south to Baramula in the north and from the mountain chain in the east to Pir Panjal in the west. Administratively the geography of Kashmir during the Sikh rule was very different from what it is today. Across the Sind valley in the east was the territory nominally under the joint control of the Sikhs and the tribes residing there, but actually, the latter had full control. Beyond the border territory were many petty principalities engaged in the perpetual warfare among themselves. Consequently the Sikhs were left in peace on that side of the valley. On the north west, the case was different. The uncivilized warlike tribes of Bombas and Khakhas carried out looting incursions into the valley and were a continuous problem for Sikh administration in Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

Maharaja Ranjit Singh skillfully consolidated the numerous petty principalities into a kingdom. But unlike Akbar, he did not evolve a permanent or better administrative system or structure elaborate enough to sustain his handiwork. He could not bring out a befitting framework to consolidate and coordinate the functioning of his quite scattered provinces. Being continuously occupied in military expeditions, he could not fully attend to the administrative front for ensuring the stability of his kingdom after his death. He, however, did establish some workable methods of governance well suited to the social and political environment of his people.<sup>2</sup>

To a modern scholar, his civil administration shall, most probably, appear vague, unsystematic, crude or even oppressive but it

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1. P.N.K., Bamzai, *History of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1962, p. 573.

2. N.M., Khilnani, *The Punjab under the Lawrences*, Shimla, 1974, p. 64.

served to mitigate the evils of the later medieval period and promote the welfare of his subjects. His personal despotism, therefore, has gained much approbation from modern writers. Psychologically speaking, his system was popular as it offered free play to the pugnacious instincts of his bold fighting race. His overshadowing personality was visible in almost all the departments, particularly in the revenue section where it held in check the *kardars*, who were assessors, announcers and collectors of revenue at *taaluqa* levels (modern district level), under the Sikh Government.<sup>3</sup>

Truly speaking, Ranjit Singh's government may rightly be called a personalised military despotism based on popular will. The despotism was indeed highly centralised. Shahmat Ali,<sup>4</sup> who visited the capital in 1838, finds it as a pure despotism, wherein the entire direction of its affairs—political, foreign and domestic rested on the tongue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

After the Sikh conquest of Kashmir in 1819, there commenced a new period so far as the Kashmiris were concerned. Afghan army, Civil rulers, traders and theologians were replaced by Khalsa army, Civil administrators and Akalis. Local historians view that rejuvenated Brahmins and sullen Muslims crowded Srinagar and towns. Anti-Sikh Kashmiris called it a period of 'Bebuj Raj'.<sup>5</sup> If one killed a cow; he was sentenced to death. A debtor's property was auctioned off and the criminal failing to bribe the Magistrate was heavily penalised. A weak *shawl*-weaver would voluntarily cut off his fingers or damage his eyes to escape heavy demands of *shawl* contractors. Old pensioners, *jagirdars* and *inamdars* lost their means of livelihood.<sup>6</sup>

With the annexation of Kashmir in 1819, in fact, a prosperous chapter in the history of Kashmir starts. Kashmiris would treat entire Sikh kingdom including the most of the part of Himachal Pradesh and West Pakistan as their own homeland. At the time of natural calamities such as famines, starvation deaths, slump in industry or agricultural and horticultural failures, Kashmiris of all categories were free to move out and settle anywhere in Panjab territory. The Maharaja owned them, provided regular relief and looked after their

3. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

4. Shahmat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, London, 1847, p. 14.

5. R.K. Parmu, *A History of Sikh rule in Kashmir*, Srinagar, 1977, p. 114.

6. *Ibid.*

welfare. He treated them exactly like other subjects. New Kashmiri colonies came up in Bhadarwah, Kishtwar, Jammu, Reasi, Punch, Rajauri, Mir Pur, Bilaspur, Mandi, Chamba, Rampur, Shimla and Nurpur in hill tracts of Panjab and also in Hoshiarpur, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Amritsar and Lahore. They settled in groups and maintained their Kashmiri identity socially and culturally. They found life easy and convenient without any fear or feelings of being non-Panjabis, in the new Panjab territory. The clerks, the artisans and labourers easily found employment. For example, a small (hill states of) Nurpur alone, out of its total population of six thousands in 1834, two-thirds were Kashmiris.<sup>7</sup> Soon they became part and parcel of new areas though their Kashmiri features, white skin, chiselled complexion etc. distinguished them everywhere from local population. The Kashmiris, by dint of hard work, maintained themselves well and never begged even in case of extreme poverty.<sup>8</sup> There was a feeling of relief, protection and satisfaction, in them, at the advent of new Hindu rule, after having remained poor slaves of the foreigners for many centuries and having suffered religious, economic and political atrocities. So much was the attraction to settle in new more prosperous Panjab areas that numberless Kashmiris conveniently settled down permanently and never thought of going back to harder life in high Kashmir mountains.

One may not agree with the biased observations that even well-intentioned Governors, pulling on well with Kashmiris, could not satisfy Maharaja Ranjit Singh's demands; and that the Maharaja's greater concern lay in receiving regularly the fixed remittance than in affording even marginal satisfaction to the Kashmiri producers. They add that very often the Governors were dismissed for not remitting higher revenue to the Lahore Drabar.<sup>9</sup> They further exaggerate that within approximately twenty years that he ruled Kashmir, the Maharaja appointed as many as ten Governors for Kashmir whose tenure for high office remained hardly two years, on an average.

Impartially speaking, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's main concern in Kashmir, after its annexation, was to provide efficient, secular and benevolent administrative machinery, with a view to granting

7. *Ibid.*, p. 276.

8. Baron Charles Von Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Panjab*, London, 1845, pp. 115-16.

9. R.K. Parmu, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

#### NATURE AND CONCEPT OF MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH'S ADMINISTRATION

economic, social and religious freedom which was hitherto denied to one community in the valley, under alien rule.<sup>10</sup> To unite the areas and its different people in its own motherland and also saving them from oppressive measures of the ruling community was no small an act. Similarly to come to the rescue of the Kashmiris, living below poverty line, by way of grants and remissions of revenue, was no mean a step taken by the Maharaja. He removed three inefficient Governors. Fourth Hari Singh Nalwa, a successful Governor, was recalled because his services could be more fruitfully utilised as army commander.<sup>11</sup> Such strong actions were eye-openers to the successive Governors. To describe his Kashmir administration as the rapacious and extortionist is doing a great injustice to the just ruler.<sup>12</sup> Strictly speaking, lapses could be found everywhere and at all times but we have to study these administrator-Governors' performance and actions in the light and context of the then political and social set up in the later medieval period whether Mughal or Pathan or Sikh rule. An impartial study of the three would provide an authentic and clearer picture to the scholars of history.

In the provincial administration, next to the *nazim* i.e., the Governor in Kashmir, was the *kardar* who was normally appointed by the *nazim* in every *parganah*. He was the most important and heavily loaded State Officer, who combined in him all powers of an assessor, a collector, a treasury officer a magistrate, excise and taxation officer, a custom officer and finally a welfare officer.<sup>13</sup> He was without any fixed scale of honorarium or salary and usually lived on graft and squeeze. His chief function was collection of revenue and after meeting the cost of establishment under him, to deposit the balance in State treasury immediately. In some cases there could be arbitrary assessments and forcible collection.

A few Panjab Land Revenue Reports give an impression that the rule of the *kardar* was oppressive and despotic. The tendency of the accounts furnished by Burnes, Lyall, Purser, Thornburn, Ibbetson and others, irrespective of their statistical information, is to only exhibit the dark side of the Sikh rule in Kashmir valley, and illustrate undue exaggeration of the blessings of the successive

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

12. Bikranjit Hasrat, *Life and Times of Ranjit Singh*, Hoshiarpur, 1977, p. 296.

13. *Ibid.*

British rule in the Sikh kingdom excluding Kashmir and Jammu which had been given to Dogra Gulab Singh in 1846 as a reward for services rendered and friendship established with the British after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839.

The grudging admission of equitable Sikh rule is in the classic observation by Ibbetson, when he says that their rule was just and even in that they meted out oppression to all with an equal hand.<sup>14</sup> Undoubtedly, Diwan Sawan Mal's administration in Multan province was in sharp contrast with that of the *Subahs* of Kashmir and Peshawar. Diwan Sawan Mal, the Governor of Multan, a benevolent but devoted administrator with qualities of head and heart; and further firmly committed to the welfare of the subjects. He earned a name by introducing new appreciable schemes especially on agricultural and revenue fronts. Kashmir valley, in this regard, was quite lagging behind by receiving less experienced administrators, completely committed to public welfare first and higher revenue collection only after ensuring facilities for higher production to the artisans and agriculturists, in the valley.

However, there were three serious defects in Kashmir administration, which were, to a large extent, responsible for so called oppression and extortion, only after Maharaja's death.<sup>15</sup> First, there was no institutional check on the *kardars*. Secondly, the *kardar* was so overburdened with the huge multifarious duties that several important matters passed into the hands of his assistants, who were poorly paid and hence had no incentive to work properly with devotion, zeal and full energy in a positive and absolutely honest manner. Lastly, the delegation of unlimited powers to *kardars* tempted them to feather their own nests at the cost of the public. As a matter of fact, the idea of 'separation of powers' never occurred to the rulers of the sub-continent of that era and it is on record that even the collectors of the East India Company assume both executive and judicial powers with hardly any legal or administrative check. Officials in the valley worked well out of fear and regards of the Maharaja, but inherent defects did begin to appear after his death.

14. Denzil Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, Lahore, 1916, p. 127.

15. J. D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, London, 1849, p. 168.

## Book Reviews

*History of PEPSU : Patiala and East Punjab States Union* by Gursharan Singh, Konark Publishers, Delhi, 1991, pp. 332. price : Rs. 156/-.

The influence of history on the existence of mankind is as significant as the survival of man. It is the history of humanity that helps generate idea, ideology and philosophy. These formations, in turn, affect history in the form of sprouting of new formations which bring further transformation in society. In a way, the ideas have the crucial importance in the societal behaviour and ultimate change. Thus history and ideas have reversible relationships. In fact, it is the nature of history that also determines the nature of ideas to be emulated. In this process, it is a continued dialogue between history and ideas that provides the rationale for human existence.

Seen in this context, the various issues emerge at a particular juncture and acquire specific nomenclature and significant meaning. One such issue in the evolution of social beings of this region is the subject of PEPSU—a political connotation around which the book revolves. The people of this specific geographical entity were living in a peculiar socio-political atmosphere and were interacting on explicit lines before it was merged with a bigger political set-up with different nature and meaning of control and hegemony. The process of this transformation is the core of this work.

The disintegration of Mughal authority led to the emergence of diverse political units in this region. The historical environment brought about the formation of a bigger political hegemony with domination of Sikh influence and Maharaja Ranjit Singh as the centre of this influence. Those who remained outside the orbit of this influence sought the help of another bigger political unit—the British, who at that time were encircling the Sikh dominated areas, watching the situation keenly and evolving strategies to capture it.

Again the historical developments helped the British to emerge as the sole hegemonic unit which not only occupied the once Sikh influenced areas but also told the other smaller units their specific place by indirectly interfering in their administrations. However,

the British allowed their *defacto* positions. The social atmosphere in those two different political environments will not be beyond the scope of discussion here. In the British dominated areas the control mechanism was essentially dominated by the economic considerations. In order to gain maximum out of this hegemonic relationship, the British evolved a set of rules and legitimised them so that these should appear as transforming the life of those controlled by them. This process involved the introduction of new technology and ideas. But in the long course of interaction this very set-up helped in generating the forces which proved hostile to the British interests. These were the forces of resentment, protest and ultimate revolt by the controlled.

This new generated historical force also influenced the people controlled by other political units where the masses were equally suppressed under the control mechanism of their exploitation. Consequently, new social forces emerged with specific issues. Two major areas of concern were the peasant grievances and the interests of the urban middle class which by this time had social significance. At the same, the cultural issues also emerged which the controllers of power attempted to give them communal tinge. The interests of the artisan class remained ignored because of the system of *sepidari* prevalent at that time.

Again the historical environment in 1947 brought a different scenario of control mechanism. The British controlled areas were occupied by new political forces but the issue of the areas controlled by princely rulers was not settled by this change. In order to control these powers the new force had its own ideas which ultimately were successful. But at the same time the process involved left many issues unsolved. These very issues had significant effect on the later developments of this region.

Thus the subject of the book is very interesting account of the evolution process of man and adds to our understanding, except with limitation of the proper insight of the role of Akali Dal, that how in the given circumstances the nature of political hegemony determines the nature of societal evolution where seeds are sown for the sprouting of new formation. And hence the continuity of human civilization around certain and specific issues and ideas. Though sometimes it involves heavy toll of innocent citizens. But it can be avoided if the historical forces pay heed to the warning given by Fukuyama in his

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"End of History and the Last Man" where he seems to have advocated the formation of a specific historical environment which should not be based on this undue toll.

NAVTEJ SINGH\*

## II

*Caste and Sect in village Life : Satnamis of Chhattisgarh 1900-1950* by Saurabh Dube. Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, pp. 52, Rs. 45.

Caste is and has been a principal feature of social organization in India since the Vedic times. Through this institution a person inherits a social status at the time of his birth from the parents and hence his caste is fixed for life. The caste is determined by a common traditional occupation, although it may be determined also by a common tribal or racial origin, by adherence to a common religious sect, or by some other common peculiarity. In this context India represents the most extreme and thorough embodiment of numerous and varied castes and sects. The book under review is a case-study of a particular rural caste-group and sect, namely the Satnamis of Chhattisgarh.

Satnamis are mainly found in Chhattisgarh in the east of the Central Provinces of India. In the beginning of the present century they numbered about 4,00,000 of whom all but 2000 were members of the caste of Chamars. This sect is said to have originated in 1820s with one Ghasiram or Ghasidas, who was a Chamar by caste of Girod village in Billaspur District. Although he belonged to a poor peasant family he received a wide recognition of his saintly leanings amongst his fellow caste-men. He soon became the Messiah of the down-trodden people of his area and set some religious sermons to be strictly followed by them. His teachings included the worship of the *satnam* or True Name of God; abstention from meat, liquor, tobacco and certain vegetables including tomatoes, chillies and brinjal; disbelief in idol-worship; and the prohibition of the employment of cows for agriculture and of ploughing after the midday meal. However, he permitted his followers to render reverence to the sun-god every morning and evening with a pious ejaculation. There were to be no distinction of caste among the Satnamis who were declared to be socially equal. These practices continued to be followed scrup-

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ulously until the death of Ghasidas in 1850 and not long after his death his followers again began to indulge in fake rituals and superstitions.

This brief monograph gives a somewhat detailed narration of the socio-economic life of the Satnamis of Chhattisgarh. The study is divided into four parts. To begin with, the author gives a succinct account of the origin of the Satnamis, their beliefs and practices. The people of the low castes, the *Chamars*, the *telis* (oil-pressers) and *rawats* (graziers) had joined this sect in large numbers. The author dilutes upon the inferior social position of the Satnami caste and sect and their challenging temperament vis-a-vis the dominating and overbearing attitude of the upper caste Hindus, especially the Brahmins towards them. Basing his study largely on oral testimonies, he seeks to highlight the agonies and discriminations in their day-to-day life which the members of the Satnami sect had to bear at the hands of the Brahmins in the social set up of the society. The lot of the Satnamis in the rural agrarian structure was no better. They were small land holders or tenants who were subjected to all sorts of exploitation by the covetous and callous *malguzars*. Apart from the exorbitant rents which they had to pay to the *malguzars* they had to pay *nazranas* which were levied arbitrarily by the *malguzars* and if they did not have the money they borrowed the sum on high rate of interest from the *sahukars* who were often the *malguzars* themselves. In the cases of transfer of tenancy rights, too, the proprietors took a considerable share (between 25 to 50 per cent) of the transfer price as 'consent money.' These socially and economically downtrodden people had to bear numerous losses and insults and were almost treated like chattels. The author has given a list of 'particular losses and insults' (p. 22) as instances of the humiliating position of the people of this caste and sect—losses and insults which would make one's hairs stand on end.

The economic difficulties of the Satnamis were compounded by the principles of subordination to upper caste that were structured in everyday village life; the community's efforts to reconstitute its status invited upper caste derision, scorn and abuse, observes the author. It is a world-wide phenomenon that economically weaker section has a limited role to play in the society and is always compounded by the principle of subordination to upper caste; so was the case with the Satnamis.

But in due course of time the Satnamis became conscious about

#### BOOK REVIEWS

their social degradation and they showed inclination to revolt against some of the invidious practices. The privileged position appropriated by the dominant castes within the ritual hierarchy of purity and pollution began to be challenged at times by the Satnamis. The replacement of *purohit* and *nai* by the *bhandari* and *sathidar* respectively—to do ritual work of the Satnami sect (which was distasteful to the upper castes notably Brahmins)—showed unmistakably the Satnamis' bitter contempt for orthodox practices and their hostility to the Brahmins' arbitrary authority. Again, insistence on travelling in the same compartment with upper caste Hindus and the wearing of nose-rings (an ornament hitherto forbidden to the lower castes) by their women-folk expressed their feeling of resentment and anguish with the existing unjust practices; however it sometimes gave rise to a class-antagonism.

The last part of the study dwells on all kind of gender problems like rituals, sexual exploitation and marriage. During the period under review many social evils and superstitions had crept up in this sect. One of these was a kind of social prostitution or a ceremony which a person had to undergo at the time of his initiation as a full members of Satnampanth. This ceremony is known as Satlok. In this ceremony a newly-married wife had to submit for one night to the embraces of a number of men of the village whom she named to her husband as her Guru or preceptor. This ceremony as well as *jhangeri chauka* and *sukh dekhna* rituals (which have been connected with the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*) discussed by the author on the bases of mere oral evidences cannot be fully relied upon in the absence of any documentary evidence. The author appears to be well conscious about his limitation in this regard. However, it may be believed that the Satnamis had some peculiar notions about the institution of marriage and morality.

All things considered, the present monograph is a highly interesting and informative study of the socio-economic life of the Satnamis of Chhattisgarh during the first half of the present century. The author has taken pains to collect materials from the relevant published reports, books, articles, and dissertations and presented the subject matter in a lucid manner. There is little doubt that it will be found useful by the lay readers as well as by the students engaged in the study of socio-cultural movements of modern India.

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## FORM IV

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